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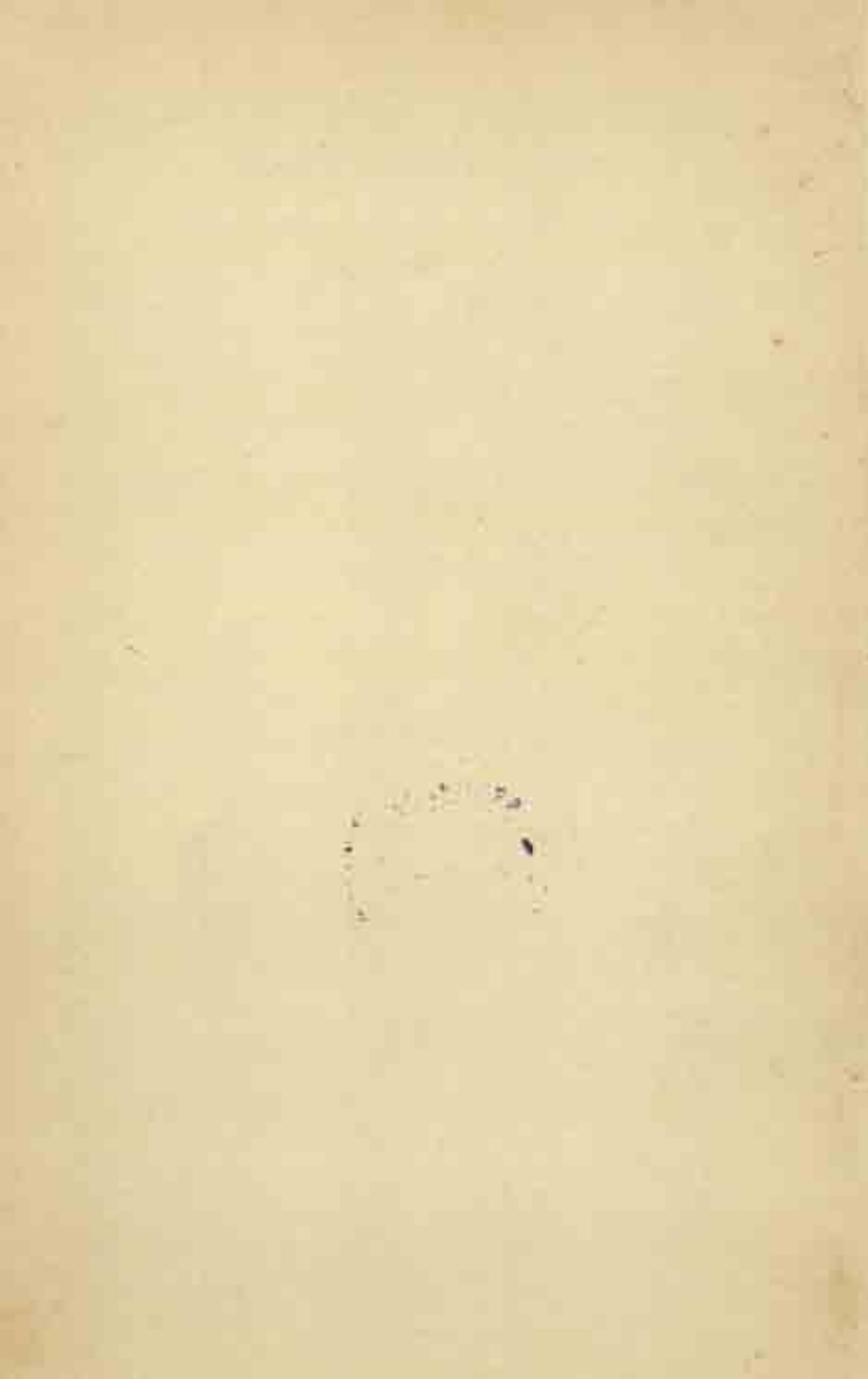
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A HISTORY OF THE SUDAN



# A HISTORY OF THE SUDAN

*From the Earliest Times  
to 1821*

by  
A. J. ARKELL

*Reader in Egyptian Archaeology,  
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late Sudan Political Service*

With a Foreword by  
SIR HAROLD MACMICHAEL  
G.C.M.G., D.S.O.

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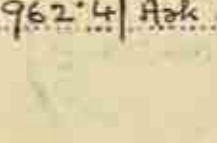
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FOREWORD

At the close of the last century the whole of the vast heterogeneous area of the Sudan was in a dark age of chaos. Security and justice were no more than names, savagery and barbarism were the only realities, and practically nothing was known about the country by the outside world. A wonderful transformation has since then taken place. Pacification has been completed, law and order established, great schemes of development have been brought to fruition and provided funds for all the appurtenances of civilization.

Great Britain, having duly played her part, is now about to stand aside and give the Sudanese the full freedom which they desire. It is only fitting that, as the new era opens, there should be made available to the Sudanese in readily accessible form all the knowledge which has been accumulated during these latter times about their past history. In some fields much has already been done to this end. Many specialized studies have appeared concerning various periods and districts—the most recent of them Mr Arkell's own *Early Khartoum* and *Shaheinab* and Mr Crawford's work *The Fung Kingdom of Sennar*, and articles in *Sudan Notes and Records* and other journals, and even learned treatises by Sudanese savants of the present generation dealing with the modern history of their country. But no attempt has hitherto been made to cover in a single book the whole of those early ages to which the archaeologist and the anthropologist hold the keys.

Indeed, though the Sudan has now become, politically speaking, a single whole, embracing the million square miles that lie, from north to south, between Egypt, the Congo and East Africa, and, from east to west, between



Abyssinia and French Equatorial Africa, it can hardly be regarded as a unit from all angles. Geographical and climatic features have facilitated intercourse, ethnical and cultural, between east and west; but contacts between the negro south and the north have been more artificial throughout the millennia of the past and, until recent days, confined to hostile incursions directed to destruction and loot and retaliation rather than to the development of amicable relations. The raiding and trading of slaves by the northern Arabs have, it is true, led to a marked degree of racial fusion in the northern and central districts, but the South has remained racially untouched.

Nevertheless, as the country is now one, it is right that it should be treated as such. Neither factors of space nor time have deterred Mr Arkell and he ranges freely from the earliest stone age to the advent of the 'Turks' in 1821 and from the Mediterranean to the Great Lakes. One cannot help feeling that it must sometimes be a relief to the most enthusiastic of scholars, faced by a vast tract of country, to find no records available. This, broadly speaking, is the position as regards the Southern Sudan. For the east and west the clues are more plentiful, but much has necessarily to be left to inference in the spheres of probability, likelihood and possibility. For the north direct evidence is comparatively plentiful at every level from records and monuments that have survived; though even here, research has been confined to the limited number of sites at which excavation has been begun and awaits completion. It is upon this northern portion of the Sudan, known to the ancient Egyptians as Cush, and later comprised in the Meroitic Kingdom which came to an end in the 4th century A.D., that this book chiefly concentrates attention. It provides a corpus of facts and evidence which must prove of great value to the historians of the future.

Of Mr Arkell's technical qualifications as an archaeologist and historian it would be impertinent for me to speak, but in one respect at least they have an exceptional quality. For many years he served as an administrative officer in the Sudan Political Service, and his work as such in various provinces gave him that broad knowledge of the country, its people and their languages, without which the research-worker so often finds himself at a disadvantage. In due course the Sudan Government, realizing the great contribution which anthropological studies, such as those of Professors Seligman and Evans-Pritchard, could make to administration, and the need to collate and extend the results of the work of the many distinguished archaeologists who had visited the country and excavated its monuments, decided to appoint a Commissioner for Archaeology and Anthropology. The choice fell upon Mr Arkell, and, though he has now retired from the Sudan to take up the teaching of Egyptology at University College, London, it is indeed gratifying that he has found time, by writing this book, to round off the record of the studies to which he has given so many years of his life.

HAROLD MACMICHAEL



## PREFACE

If this book had a dedication, it would be dedicated to my many Sudanese friends. They will not all read it—not all of them can read, and fewer still can read English—but it is my hope that many of them and their children will benefit from it.

It was twenty-five years ago, when I was District Commissioner, Sennar, that I first realized the need for the history and geography taught in Sudan schools to be based on the history and geography of the Sudan. The history and geography of Europe, as then taught, tended to alienate educated Sudanese from their natural surroundings and to leave them unable to apply to the problems of their own life what they had learned at school. Education in the history and geography of the Sudan should, however, attune them more closely to their own background and produce a generation more happy and effective because more closely attached to the roots from which it has sprung. The materials for a geography of the Sudan were available, and it has been written. But a history is much more difficult to write; for so little is known. At Sennar in 1929 I was on the site of the capital of a kingdom of world-wide fame scarcely 400 years old, and yet no one knows for certain who the black Fung sultans, who founded it, were, or whence they came. Hence the time it has taken to produce even this little book; and it was only made possible by the Sudan Government putting me in charge of the antiquities of the country in 1938 and so giving me the opportunity to amass some knowledge of the country's past. It must not be thought in the Sudan that it is the last word. It will be recognized everywhere else to be but a beginning; and as such it is offered to the Sudan, and particularly to its schoolmasters, in the hope that it will provide them with a frame-work for the history text-books they will now be able to



compose for their classes with its help. May it also spur advanced students of the University College of Khartoum and others to further research into the history of the Sudan. It will be found, I hope, of interest and value to all educated Sudanese, not only students, written as it is at the dawn of the era in which they are becoming once more responsible for the government of their own country. There are lessons for them to learn from the ancient history of the Sudan, and particularly how to avoid mistakes made in the past in tackling problems similar to those which still face them to-day. History shows, for instance, that throughout the last 5000 years, there has been a steady southward advance of the desert. Whether there is a major climatic cause behind this is uncertain, but, as seen recently in America, deserts can be entirely man-made; and once made, they have a deteriorating effect on the climate, rendering it more extreme. Their history should thus teach the Sudanese to be on their guard against unwittingly playing into the hands of an insidious enemy ever present with them.

In July 1953 a conference on the History of Africa south of the Sahara was held in London and attended by delegates from all over that continent. The discussions made clear that early kingdoms and tribal movements in central Africa can only be accurately dated when the history of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan has been worked out in sufficient detail for it to be possible for events that took place further afield to be brought into chronological relation with events in the Sudan. For it is through the Sudan alone, with its proximity to Egypt where history began about five thousand years ago, that the light of history can be made to dawn on the past few millennia of what has hitherto been Darkest Africa to the historian. The history of the Sudan must therefore be of considerable importance to those engaged in working out the history of the rest of central Africa.

The ordinary reader in Europe too will, it is thought, find considerable interest in a subject about which only too little is known. He will not find here anything about the modern Sudan; but he will find something about its past which will help his understanding of the present. To England the Sudan has been of particular interest since Gordon gave his life for it at Khartoum and Kitchener's men came to like and respect their Sudanese opponents. Many British, American and Indian soldiers and airmen fought and served in the Sudan in the last war; and they still remember with affection and admiration their Sudanese comrade in arms and his fellow countrymen. This book should add to their knowledge of a land and people whom they began to know in the war.

It was an Englishman, Browne, who first told the English-speaking world about Darfur in the west of the Sudan and a Scotsman, James Bruce, to whom we owe much of our firsthand knowledge of the kingdom of Sennar and who first rediscovered Meroë and its pyramids in the 18th century. Indeed, all those whose heritage is the Bible cannot fail to find interest in the history of the land whence came the eunuch of Queen Candace whom St. Philip met and converted in the Holy Land, 'the land of the rustling wings which is beyond the rivers of Cush' of which the prophet Isaiah spoke (R.V.) and the home of the king who was the origin of the proverbial 'broken reed'.

And finally as a history of Cush and Nubia, in the compilation of which my debt to James Breasted's *Ancient Records* and T. Säve-Söderbergh's brilliant *Ägypten und Nubien* will be obvious from my frequent references to them, I hope that Egyptologists will find that this book to some extent fills a gap in their shelves. Chapters 6 and 7 were read in draft by Mr Dows Dunham and Dr M. F. Laming Macadam, and have much benefited from their criticism.

I consider it a great honour that Sir Harold MacMichael

has written a foreword to the book; for Sir Harold, after a long and distinguished career in the Sudan where he himself made history in Darfur, is the author of books which entitle him to be regarded as the Father of Sudan History. In particular, his *History of the Arabs in the Sudan* is indispensable as a source book to any historian of the Sudan, and will long remain so.

I am glad to be able to express here my gratitude to the Sudan Government both for having given me the opportunity to acquire the knowledge of the country's antiquities without which this book could not have been written, and also for subsidizing in part its publication. I am also most grateful to the Board of the Athlone Press for the form which they have given to the book, and to their officers for friendly and helpful advice in the final stages of its editorial preparation. The maps and figs. 3, 24 and 26 have been drawn for the book by Mr G. R. Versey of the Geography Department, University College, London; figs. 5, 13, 19 and 23 by Mr H. M. Stewart of the Institute of Archaeology; and figs. 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 15, 22 and 27 by Professor W. B. Emery. To all of them I am most grateful for their assistance. To Mr Dows Dunham, Curator of Egyptian Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, I am indebted for the photographs of the Harvard-Boston Expedition reproduced in Plates 2a, 3a and 11, and for permission to reproduce them. I am grateful, also to the Oriental Institute, Chicago, for permission, after payment of a fee, to reproduce—as acknowledged in the List of Plates—a number of the excellent photographs taken by the late Professor James Breasted as long ago as 1905, and on which it is difficult to improve. To the Trustees of the British Museum, I owe permission to reproduce their official photographs in Plates 6a, 12b and 17b. The remaining plates are from my own camera.

University College, London

February, 1954

A.J.A.

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## CHAPTER I

### Introductory

THE Sudan, in its full form Bilad es Sudan 'the land of the blacks', was the name given by the medieval Arabs to the negro belt which stretches right across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Generally speaking, it lies immediately south of the Sahara, but the area of which this book attempts to give the history is the 'land of the blacks' south of Egypt. This eastern Sudan is linked with Egypt and the Mediterranean to the north by that unique river the Nile, which for many miles before it reaches Egypt proper, forces its way through a waterless desert of rock and sand drift in the northern Sudan and Lower Nubia (the latter lying between the Second Cataract near Wadi Halfa and the First Cataract near Aswan). Particularly between the Third and Second Cataracts, in the area known as the *Batin el Hagar* or 'the Belly of the Rocks', owing to the nature of the country, communication along the Nile valley is very difficult either by river or by land along the banks, even with the efficient motor transport available to-day. Thus though it was joined to Egypt by the Nile, the eastern Sudan was no more closely linked with the Mediterranean than the western Sudan, from which three or four comparatively easy routes ran through lines of oases to the north coast.

The present-day political boundaries of the 'Anglo-Egyptian' Sudan may be seen in any good atlas. Its area is just under a million square miles. This is approximately the area with which this book deals. Its boundaries throughout history have altered slightly from time to time. Roughly we are concerned with that part of Africa

Unlike the White Nile these rivers flow rapidly, and are subject to a large and short-lived rise in level during the rains. The Abyssinian mountains are continued to the north in a modified form by the Red Sea Hills, which run in a north-west direction close to the western shore of the Red Sea until they enter Egypt. In this north-eastern corner of the Sudan the rocky desert falls gradually towards the Nile, but at Abu Hamed, about  $19^{\circ}$  N., between the Fifth and Fourth Cataracts it causes the Nile to turn right about in its course and to make a huge S bend of which the head is at the Second Cataract and the foot at the junction of the Blue and White Niles.

In the desert belt in the north of our area the rocks have been laid bare by erosion. From the sandstone which is the predominant rock the prevailing north wind is continually rolling grains of quartz sand and building them up into dunes and sand-hills which run in the direction of the wind. On the southern edge of the desert region and as far south as latitude  $12^{\circ}$  N. to the west of the White Nile is a vast spread of dune sand now stable because anchored by vegetation nurtured by a limited rainfall. This forms a rolling plain of which the drainage is mainly towards the Nile, although few of the watercourses reach it. In the north it provides excellent grazing for camels, while in the south in the rainy season it offers both pasture and a refuge from fly to cattle-owning tribes who spend the dry weather near the Bahr el Arab to the south or along the White Nile. West of this rolling sandy plain lies the more hilly country of Darfur, with its main feature the great volcanic mountain of Jebel Marra, which rises at its southern end to over 10,000 feet and has a considerable influence on the rainfall in Darfur. This mountain mass is continued to the north in a smaller way (as are the Abyssinian highlands in the east) by a tangle of hills, some of no mean size, which get gradually more broken

and scattered, until they almost come to an end about latitude 16° N., although farther to the north-west they are continued by the high ground of Ennedi and the mountain mass of Tibesti.

The climate of the Sudan is predominantly continental. The Red Sea introduces certain maritime characteristics, but they are confined to the narrow coastal plain and the eastern slopes of the Red Sea Hills. Over most of the country the chief feature of the weather is a battle between the north and south winds. In the winter the dry north wind is usually cold, although occasionally warm; while in summer it is very hot. The south wind is more uniform, being primarily maritime and bringing rain. The front on which these winds contend moves practically the whole length of the Sudan during the year, reaching the extreme south at the peak of the winter in January, and the latitude of Dongola in the north at the height of the rainy period in August.

The annual rainfall varies from nil in the north to 60 inches in the south, producing country varying from barren desert in the north to forest in the south. In the central Sudan the effective rainfall is concentrated into a period of four to five months; during the rest of the year the plain is covered with dry parched herbage and such drought-resisting trees and shrubs as are able to survive the dry season. It is in this belt that good crops of millet, sesame, etc. are grown during the rainy season. Southwards the wet period lengthens until in the extreme south rain occurs in varying amounts in almost every month of the year. The distribution of rainfall is reflected in the types of vegetation, which pass from almost leafless drought-resisting types in the north to evergreen and deciduous forests in the south.<sup>1</sup>

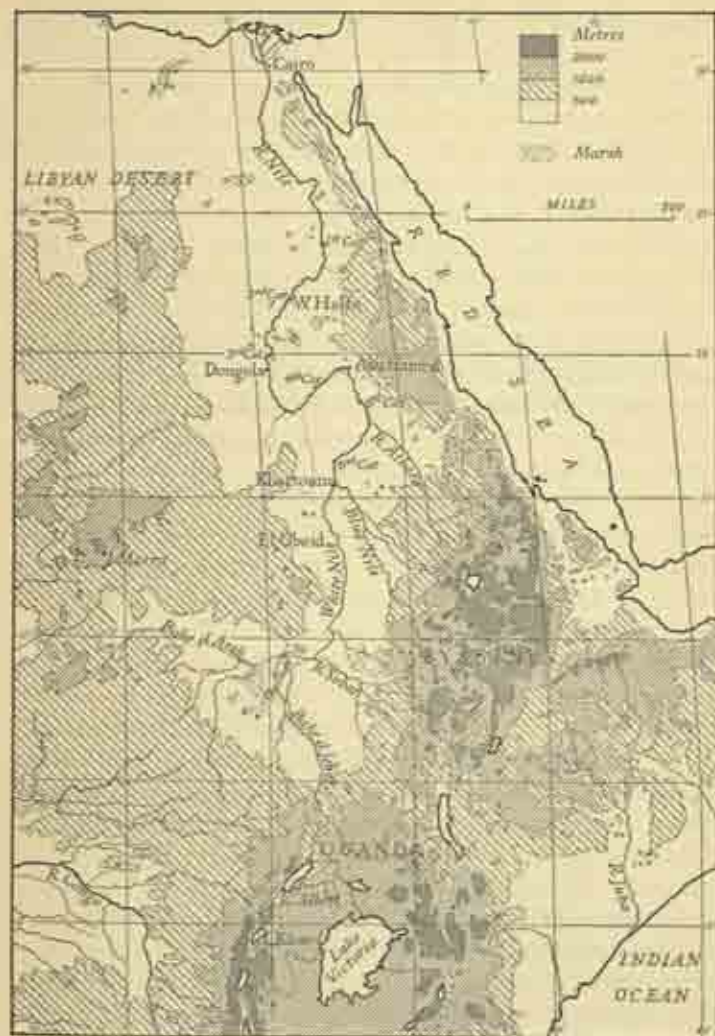
<sup>1</sup> For further information on the geology, climate and vegetation of the Sudan, see the introductory chapters of Tothill, 1948.



which lies south of the First Cataract of the Nile, west of the Red Sea and the Abyssinian highlands, south-east of the Libyan Desert, east of the watershed between the Nile and Lake Chad, north-east of the watershed between the Nile and the Congo, and north of the rain forests of Uganda. But we must admit at the start that at present all that part of our area south of parallel  $10^{\circ}$  N., i.e. what is known as the Southern Sudan to-day, has no history before A.D. 1821, although a study of the archaeology and tribal traditions of the area, particularly of the Azande in the south-west, the Shilluk and Dinka in the centre, and Beni Shangul and Kaffa in the south-east, will no doubt render it possible one day to reconstruct its past to some extent.

This Southern Sudan is a swampy plain surrounded by higher ground on all sides except at the extreme north, where after its junction with the Sobat just south of latitude  $10^{\circ}$  N. the broad and easily navigable White Nile makes its way north to join the Blue Nile at Khartoum. The plain it leaves is traversed by innumerable streams, which rise in the surrounding high ground and run generally towards Lake No near the mouth of the Sobat. The chief of them, the Bahr el Jebel or 'Mountain Nile', brings the water of the Nile from the East African highlands on the equator into our area along a continuation of the western Rift Valley, in which lie Lakes Tanganyika, Edward and Albert, and then loses itself in the papyrus swamps of the Sudd. This obstacle to navigation is perhaps the last stage of an ancient inland fresh-water sea, such as Lake Victoria still is, and Lake Chad is rapidly ceasing to be.

From the Abyssinian highlands outside our area to the east three main tributary rivers run roughly parallel in a north-westerly direction to join the Nile between  $10^{\circ}$  N. and  $17^{\circ}$  N., the Sobat, the Blue Nile and the Atbara.



Map 1. The Nile Valley

It is impossible to give a short sketch of the trend of climatic change over the whole of north Africa in the past ten thousand years or so, for in that area all the necessary evidence has not yet been found, nor is it easy to find, as I will try to explain. No doubt there were important changes of climate throughout Africa during the millennia of the Old Stone Age. In Kharga Oasis Miss Caton-Thompson found evidence of two major and one minor pluvial periods in the Old Stone Age. In East Africa Dr Leakey has established that there were four major and two minor pluvial periods before the present. A pluvial or rainy period is one in which the rainfall was higher than it is to-day, while during an inter-pluvial period it was much reduced. But a pluvial period is not as easy to recognize as an ice age. There is great variation in the rainfall of to-day in different parts of Africa. Conditions prevailing in one locality are unlikely to be of general application. An increase of ten inches in the rainfall will make a great difference when desert conditions prevail, but little difference where the rainfall is already 50 inches per annum. Height above sea-level also has considerable local effect on the climate. That the climate in Abyssinia has been colder than it is to-day is shown by traces of moraines lower down on Mount Semien than they occur to-day, but there is no evidence that this applies outside Abyssinia. It is thus not certain that there were the same number of pluvial periods throughout Africa. But the rhythm of four major pluvials in East Africa corresponds with the rhythm of the four ice ages with their warmer inter-glacial periods that has been established in Europe; and the two rhythms may be related, although in the absence of full evidence from the countries between East Africa and the Alps the connection is not proved. Such evidence as there is from Palestine, Egypt, the Sudan and Abyssinia, tends to support the



connection; and in any case the southward advance of the ice in Europe can only have thrust further south into Africa the depressions which to-day travel eastward from the Atlantic along the Mediterranean. This must have resulted in increased rainfall in North Africa until, with the retreat of the ice, the rainstorms moved north again and Africa became drier, some areas becoming desert.

The period with which this book is concerned begins in the first of the two minor pluvials of East Africa. We shall see in the next chapter that the rainfall in the Khartoum area was considerably heavier then than it is now. In Europe also a cold and dry period which succeeded the last ice age had come to an end, and about 6000 B.C. had begun the so-called Atlantic Period, when the climate was warmer and moister than it is to-day. The evidence for North Africa is not yet clear, but we may be sure that the climate there too was less dry than it is at present. Wind-blown sand is evidence of drought. The subsequent anchoring of that sand by vegetation (see page 4) indicates a change to a climate wetter than that when the sands were laid down, but not necessarily very wet. Thus the increased rainfall round Khartoum no doubt spread as far west as Kordofan. In Upper Egypt large tree stumps along now quite dry watercourses at Badari near Asyut show that there too 6000 years ago or so the climate was not as dry as it is to-day, although it was already drying up, as has been proved in Kharga Oasis. Pictures of elephant (Pl. 1a), giraffe and other wild animals on the rocks between the First and Third Cataracts show that it has not always been desert there, and when history begins in Egypt the southernmost nome or administrative district, probably originally an independent tribal area, is known as Elephant Nome, although the nearest living wild elephants to-day are only to be found 200 miles south of Khartoum.

During the Old Stone Age men lived in North Africa as elsewhere in much of Europe and Africa, in small packs preying on the huge herds of game and slowly learning to make better stone implements with which to skin their kills. Those skins were no doubt used for rough shelters from the wind and sun and also for blankets and eventually for clothes; but it was so long ago that nothing but the stone tools have survived.<sup>1</sup> The earliest recognizable stone knives, pebbles from which two flakes have been knocked, one from each side, so as to produce a cutting edge, can be found near the Fourth and Second Cataracts in gravel left when the Nile was running 150-200 feet higher than it does to-day. The Nile had worn its bed down to within a few feet of its present level by the time man had learned to make that perfected universal skinning tool called a 'hand-axe'. This is an almond-shaped stone object about 6 inches long, sharpest on either side of the point, and with the butt sometimes sharpened as well. It was held in the hand, but not used as an axe, nor was it hafted or thrown. All the long stages by which this tool evolved have been traced in East Africa. In Europe there are gaps in the development because at the peaks of the ice ages Europe became uninhabitable. Not all the animals there died out. Some did, but many moved southwards following the grazing dependent on the rain-storms and warmth, and man of course followed the animals on which he preyed. Few bones of hand-axe man have survived for certain, but a skull found with hand-axes in the gravel of the river Thames at Swanscombe near London is apparently an early form of *Homo sapiens*, the species to which all modern

<sup>1</sup> For excellent general accounts see Leakey, 1953 and Oakley, 1950. For all that is known so far of the Old Stone Age in the Sudan, see Arkell, 1949 n.

men belong. Hand-axe man was eventually followed in both Europe and Africa by men who prepared a lump of stone by working it so that a well-shaped flake of stone could be knocked off and used as a knife. This technique in Europe is labelled Levalloisian, after Levallois, a suburb of Paris, where it was first noticed. In Palestine and elsewhere the human remains found associated with this kind of stone knife, or in archaeological language, with this Levalloisian Culture, are those of Neanderthal man, so labelled because first recognized at Neanderthal in Germany. No remains of Neanderthal man, a different species of *Homo* from *Homo sapiens*, have been found in Africa. The earliest human remains found in the Sudan are a skull found at Singa on the Blue Nile, that came from under 28 feet of black clay, probably laid down in a pluvial period corresponding to the last of the major pluvials of East Africa.<sup>1</sup> It belonged to an early form of Bushman, which suggests that though Bushmen are now confined to the Kalahari Desert in south-west Africa, that race was once much more widely distributed in Africa. One of the Bushman characteristics was to draw on rocks lively action scenes, sometimes of groups of men fighting but usually of hunting. Similar pictures have been found in the Libyan Desert and as far north as Spain. With the Singa skull were found a few stone tools showing the technique associated in Europe with Neanderthal man. It may be that this technique was independently invented in Africa by the early Bushman. Tools of this kind are to be found in the desert in the northern Sudan, where man cannot exist to-day, thus providing evidence that the rainfall was greater when they were dropped than it is now.

<sup>1</sup> For details see Arkell, Bate, Wells and Lacaille, 1951.



A development of the flake knives associated with Neanderthal man in Europe and with the early Bushman at Singa is to be found over much of North Africa. In it many small stone tools made like these knives have a sharp point and a carefully worked tang. It looks as if this tang was made for fitting it to a wooden shaft, although no wood surviving from the period has yet been found. If this is so, these people, who have been labelled the Aterians, seem to have made the great invention of the bow and arrow. Such an invention must have given them increased effectiveness as hunters, but for some reason or other they do not appear to have established themselves nearer the Nile valley than Kharga Oasis.

Another people, who have been labelled Capsians, after the ancient name of Gafsa in Tunis, followed the Aterians. Their typical tools are stone knives with blunted backs and tiny half-moon-shaped pieces of stone, also with blunted backs, which were probably mounted in arrow-shafts as barbs. Small stone tools of this kind are found as far south as the Cape, and between Kenya and South Africa the people who made them are usually labelled Wilton. A settlement approximately contemporary with the Capsians and with somewhat the same kind of stone tools has been investigated at Sebil near Kom Ombo in Upper Egypt and labelled Sebilian.

The descendants of these hunters with small stone tools who bring the Old Stone Age to an end, seem to have lived in definite settlements, at any rate for part of the year. Possibly because game was getting scarcer, their diet, judging from the remains they have left, included considerable quantities of fish and molluscs; and a new fishing weapon, the barbed bone spear (see Fig. 2), of which the earliest examples known come from Europe towards the end of the Old Stone Age, was in fairly general use. These people have been labelled Mesolithic, the

men of the Middle Stone Age<sup>1</sup> between the Old Stone (Palaeolithic) Age and the New Stone (Neolithic) Age.

The centuries that cover the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic must have seen several most important discoveries and inventions, to the development of which the rise of civilization is due. These advances probably took place in different parts of the Old World and over a very long time. Of recent years, much has been learned about this most important period, but much has still to be found out. The domestication of animals is not difficult during periods of famine due to prolonged drought or frost. Man has only to store food that the animals need and they will willingly become his slaves. It is probable therefore that domestication of different kinds of animals took place in different places. The Old Stone Age people of Lascaux were clearly taking a friendly interest in cattle and horses, and though they were not milking them, they may have kept them confined in valleys below the central *massif* of France, feeding them in winter and killing them when meat was required. Much earlier in East Africa stone age man was at one time feeding on baboons and at another almost entirely on zebras. It is probable that cattle, sheep and goats were domesticated somewhere in Asia at this early time, but it is by no means impossible that another species of cattle was domesticated independently in Africa, perhaps in the Nile Valley, and a species of goat may have been domesticated in Algeria. The earliest domesticated dog that we know occurs in Palestine. Horses and camels were domesticated on the plains of farther Asia. The donkey was probably domesticated in North Africa, the cat in

<sup>1</sup> In South Africa the term 'Middle Stone Age' is used in a different sense—nearly equivalent to Middle Palaeolithic. Thus the cultures of the early Bushmen are classed as Middle Stone Age there.



Africa and the hen in India. Other species were domesticated and given up as unprofitable. We know that the early Egyptians domesticated oryx, ibex, and other antelopes, and birds like storks and cranes.

Another equally important practice which started probably in Asia about this time was the improvement of the food-supply by cultivating selected grass seeds until the wheat and barley that we know to-day were developed. Regular cultivation ensured a better and more regular supply of cereal food than the haphazard collection of wild seeds and fruit by the womenfolk of the Old Stone Age and the Mesolithic hunters, and this more than anything else made an increase in the population possible. It also tended to encourage the formation of permanent or semi-permanent settlements, whereas before that man had perforce been almost entirely nomadic, moving about with the wild animals which he hunted. The earliest cultivation of cereals, that has been traced so far, occurred in Asia.

Another invention that can have been of little use until man took to a sedentary form of life was the making of pots. We have not yet discovered where pottery was first made. It is unlikely that it was invented more than once; and the invention was probably due to a lucky accident, the destruction of a house containing baskets lined with mud to prevent seeds falling through, and the realization that the burnt clay lining provided a new kind of container. Early pots are clearly related to baskets, both in their shape and external decoration, and also in being made by the coil method.

In the early part of this book we shall hear much about pots, because when man makes pottery, he creates a substance that is almost indestructible, and on which—when he lavishes care and trouble in making a vessel of beauty, as he often did before pots became merely

common kitchen ware, being replaced as *objets d'art* by vessels of stone, glass or metal—he impresses so much of his individuality that the pots of a certain place and period are never made exactly the same at any other time. Thus though none of the pots may survive complete, the fragments of them lie about a human dwelling place almost for ever, and leave a memorial of the people who made them to those who come after. Fashions in pots changed much more quickly than fashions in stone tools, and though they cannot tell us the name or race of the people who made them, they enable us to recognize that a certain group of people lived in a certain area. The earliest people who made pots lived much nearer the present than the men of the Old Stone Age, so with the fragments of these pots we are more likely to find either the bones of their dead or of the animals they ate, their bone tools if they made them, and perhaps objects of wood and other comparatively perishable materials.

Another innovation, of minor importance compared with agriculture or domestication in the effect it had on man's life, but at one time considered *the* characteristic of the period, was the introduction of a new method of sharpening stone tools. This was done by rubbing and polishing after rough shaping by chipping, and was probably a development of the grinding of red ochre. Red ochre was of great importance in the Old Stone Age and Mesolithic periods, probably for the magic properties thought to be derived from its colour, which was the same as that of the life-blood. Grinding ochre fine needed considerable pressure, and the ochre itself exercised a polishing effect on the grindstone, which often not only became smooth, but the upper grindstone, because used at an angle to the lower, tended to develop a keel: and thus may have arisen the idea of making the polished cutting edge of the celt or adze, which may well

have been the earliest carpenter's tool. Carpentry has been important in the rise of civilization; and the further importance of these polished stone adzes is that, where used and left behind, they are an indestructible characteristic of the people who made them.

The earliest shelters were probably made of wood with skins or grass, perhaps woven or thatched, spread over them. These, in the course of time, leave little trace. We now know from recent work at Jarmo and Jericho that in Asia man had learned to make quite elaborate houses of mud or stone walls, and at Jericho even a fortified town, before he had made pottery. So that it looks as if pottery was not invented in Asia. From the remains of buildings in mud or stone, we can learn something about man's home life and even of the social organization necessary before a walled town is possible.

The last and most important invention, from the historian's point of view, was writing, because it makes it possible for men to leave an account of themselves and their doings. Writing was probably invented in Asia, and consisted originally of a series of small pictures. It may first have been used by merchants for labelling the contents of jars, or for sealing them, and also for keeping simple accounts. Whether a people leave any annals or written records of their actions depends on their possession of a historic sense; and of course they must leave a large enough quantity of records before they can be deciphered and a historian can make use of them. It was about 3000 B.C. that this idea of picture-writing, which may have been brought to Egypt by merchant adventurers from Iraq, had come into sufficiently general use there for it to be possible to recover all the names of the kings of a dynasty founded by Nar-mer, the king who united Upper and Lower Egypt by conquest. He even left pictorial records of that union and of some other events of his reign. The



oldest systematic annals of the kings of Egypt and their doings date from some centuries later (Dynasty V, c. 2560-2420 B.C.); but even if only fitfully and imperfectly, history began in Egypt about 3000 B.C.; and because the northern Sudan was Egypt's neighbour in the Nile Valley, the light of history begins to dawn there about the same time. But after that dawn begins, there are centuries on end that are dark because no written records concerning them have survived, if they ever existed. And when there is no history the historian has to have recourse to the archaeologist for a reconstruction of the life of the people from the material remains those people have left behind. It will be appreciated that when there are no written records, no names of people or individuals can survive. That is why the archaeologist has to supply labels, as we shall see shortly. Nor are there records of dates, or in general of events, although the burning of a town may leave its own record in a thick layer of ashes and the contents of some of the houses preserved when the roofs fell in and buried them.

The remains which the archaeologist studies and on which he bases his reconstruction of the past accumulate when men drop imperishable objects that bear the imprint of their handiwork about their living place. The objects that survive longest are stone implements and pieces of pottery. That is why we shall hear so much about pottery in the rest of this chapter. Bones may survive in certain circumstances—when lime is being deposited where they fell. Tools made of bone may then tell their story to the archaeologist; or he may call in the anatomist to deal with certain portions, particularly the skulls of human bodies, or the zoologist to deal with teeth, horn-cores and some other portions of animal bones. From the study of human skulls the race of the people concerned can be deduced—from a few other

bones it may be possible to deduce the sex of individuals—from most other human bones nothing can be deduced unless many of them are broken in a certain way, when the action of cannibals cracking the bones for the marrow they contain may be indicated. The zoologist can say what animals were being hunted and used for food. If a considerable proportion of one species is immature, it is reasonable to deduce that that species was domesticated. From a large number of animal bones belonging to a number of different species it is possible to make out the kind of fauna that existed in that place at any time. Thus we know that at one time there were tropical animals living in the south of England. It is possible from this kind of evidence to find out about past changes of climate. Snail-shells and seeds may survive to supplement that evidence; for snails will only live under certain definite conditions of moisture; and plants and trees usually require definite climatic conditions.

The archaeologist learns what he can from a group of objects found in true association. Stone tools are often found loose on the surface of the ground. A number of them (or other objects) may be found on the surface in the same area and so in a kind of association; but they are not in an association valid for the archaeologist. They may be all of the same age or they may be of very different ages. The fact that a hand-axe is found on the surface with a coin does not mean that the hand-axe and the coin are of the same date. Attempts have been made to wring knowledge from surface finds by classifying them into types, but such a reconstruction based on typology is always unreliable. The kind of association that is required by the archaeologist is that the stone tools, bones, sherds and other objects shall be found in a layer of soil that has not been disturbed since the day when the tools, bones, sherds, etc. were dropped by the men who

last used them. The discovery of one group of objects undisturbed beneath another group of objects provides evidence that the lower group is earlier than the upper. If each group contains characteristic objects which were only made for a limited time, the evidence can be applied to other places where either set of characteristic objects is found, perhaps either above or below a third group of objects, some of which have a character of their own. The archaeologist must now label each group of remains so as not to have to describe it in full every time he mentions it. It is usual in ignorance of the real name of the people concerned, to invent one from the modern name of the place where the objects were first recognized. Thus Petrie named two of the groups of objects from prehistoric Egypt, each of which had—among other things—very characteristic painted pottery, the Amratian Culture, from Amrah, and the Gerzean Culture from Gerzeh, sites where those cultures were found. Then, when Guy Brunton and Miss G. Caton-Thompson were excavating at Badari near Asyut in Upper Egypt, they found, undisturbed beneath a layer containing sherds typical of the Amratian Culture, bone, stone and pottery remains which differed from the Amratian. They therefore needed another label for this new culture, and so the name Badarian was invented. They were thus able to establish that the sequence in time of these three cultures was Badarian, Amratian and Gerzean, for Petrie had already shown in the same way that Gerzean followed Amratian. It sometimes happens that with the increase of knowledge from the excavation of additional sites the things found at the name-site of a culture become no longer really typical of that culture as a whole. This has caused some people to label cultures by capital letters A, B, C, etc. in preference to names. This is what Reisner, the great American archaeologist, did when he started in



1907 the Archaeological Survey of Nubia by systematically excavating on behalf of the Egyptian Government all the area to be flooded by the heightening of the Aswan Dam. He labelled three cultures A Group, B Group and C Group, which he established as following one another immediately after the Gerzean Culture which also occurred there, and another culture which was evidently much later he labelled the X Group. Further work has shown that the B Group is hardly a distinct culture from the A Group; but we shall be compelled to use these other labels in our history, because the names of the people who left them have not survived, and to use any other name would be merely to add to the confusion.

By the work of Petrie and his pupils and Reisner, the five cultures Badarian, Amratian, Gerzean, A Group and C Group have been shown to follow one another in that order, and have so been dated relatively to one another. But we are still no nearer giving any of them an actual date.

Various attempts have been made by scientists to establish absolute dates for events long before writing began. One method was based on fluctuation in the amount of heat received from the sun, which at any one point varies with the tilt of the earth. This curve of insolation, worked out by the astronomer Milankovitch, appears to correspond to a series of glacial oscillations worked out in Europe by geologists. In Scandinavia attempts have been made to count the annual depositions of finely layered silts from the melt-waters of the ice sheet back into the ice ages, but such a method if reliable can only be applicable to northern Europe. Another method is based on counting the annual growth-rings of trees. And now recently in America is being developed a method of dating based on the realization that all living things contain a constant amount of a radio-active

variety of carbon, which starts to diminish when the organism dies. Half of it disappears in about 5,568 years, half the remainder in the next 5,568 years, and so on, and the quantity present will give an indication of age, up to a limit, with present methods. The usual way of determining this quantity is by measuring the radiation from a prepared sample in a delicate counting instrument, with which the degree of accuracy obtained depends on the length of time given to the count. The results are given in the form of a figure denoting the age in years plus or minus a smaller figure giving the likely error in counting. For example, the age of an archaeological sample of charcoal from a site is given as  $8639 \pm 450$  years, which means to say that there are two chances in three that the correct age will be within 450 years either way of 8639, and nineteen chances in twenty that it will be within 900 years of it. The figures given are the result of 48 hours of continuous counting; in order to halve the error, the time of counting would have to be multiplied by four, and considerations of cost therefore preclude the attainment of greater accuracy on these lines. In its present degree of refinement the method is therefore more useful in giving an idea of the age of ancient undated cultures than in assigning precise dates to more recent ones of which the approximate age is already known. It is quite possible, under present conditions, that when two cultures differ little in age, the figures may reverse their correct order owing to random error, whereas a longer count would show them in their true sequence. There is no doubt, however, that means will be devised to reduce these statistical errors, and when this is done the usefulness of the method will be much increased.

Exact dating is possible, however, in a great part of the history of Ancient Egypt. How has this been achieved?



It was only in 525 B.C., when the Persians conquered it, that Egypt came into the sphere of exact dates. However, by adding together the totals of reigns, it is possible to count back some 1052 years to the accession of Ahmes I, the first king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, which, if correct gives a date of 1577 B.C. for the beginning of the New Kingdom. It is possible to call in the help of astronomy to get dates before 1577 B.C., for the Egyptians based their calendar on the latest visible rising of Sirius before sunrise. But although they arrived at a year 365 days long, they failed to intercalate a day every four years to provide for leap year. As a result, their dates lost all relation to the seasons and passed through a complete cycle every 1460 ( $4 \times 365$  years). Since it is known that a new cycle began in A.D. 139/43, it can be calculated that earlier cycles began in 1321/17, 2781/77 and 4241/37 B.C. Thus when documents mention the rising of Sirius as occurring in a certain year of a king's reign, the absolute date of the year can be computed. In this way the dates of most of the kings of the great Twelfth and Eighteenth Dynasties have been worked out to within four years. And since the date for the opening of the Eighteenth Dynasty (1580/76) agrees with that arrived at by direct reckoning (1577) we can accept the astronomer's date for the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000/1996).

Before this date there are no absolute dates, and estimated dates for the start of the First Dynasty, when history begins, still vary between 3100 and 2800 B.C. Not long ago the discrepancy between estimates was much greater than this.

It was an Egyptian, Manetho who, writing in the third century B.C., arranged the body of Egyptian historical knowledge derived from the written records then surviving, and grouped the kings into thirty dynasties. Some of these dynasties were very important, while so little is

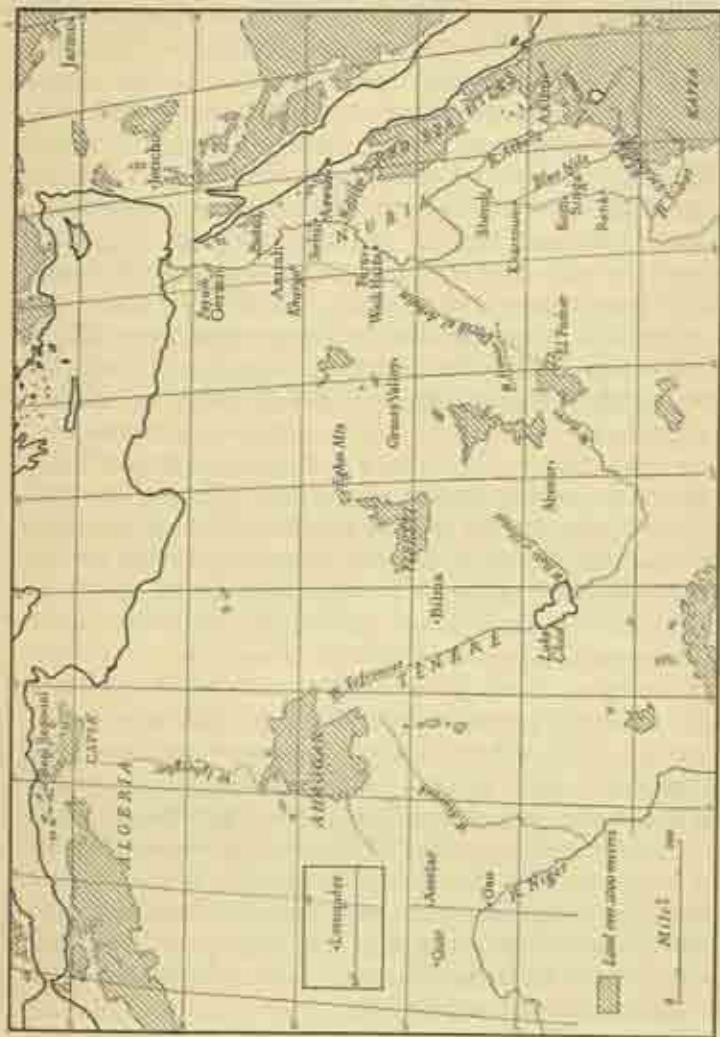
known of others that, even if they ever existed, they can be lumped together and discounted. Manetho could not, of course, take his grouping further back than the point at which written records began. From the light thrown on the history of all the Nile Valley by the use of writing in Egypt, one can understand better than would otherwise have been possible, what happened during the centuries before the invention of writing. These centuries are generally known as the Predynastic Period, the period before the dynasties listed by Manetho.

## CHAPTER II

### The Beginnings of Civilization in the Sudan: First Contacts with Egypt (before 2300 B.C.)

IN the Sudan to-day there are two main physical types of people, the so-called Brown or Mediterranean race and the Negro. Hamite and Semite are linguistic terms and should not be used as if they described physical characteristics. In a generation or two people may change from a Hamitic to a Semitic or Sudanic language, but they can only gradually alter their physical make-up by interbreeding with people of different races. Some of the so-called Fellāta near Sennar have changed their language three times in three generations, first Ffulbe, then Hausa and lastly Arabic, but they have not changed their race. There is in the Sudan of course every conceivable degree of admixture between the Brown and the Negro races. The former is thought to have originated in Arabia, various waves having left the Arabian peninsula at different times, owing primarily to climatic change, periodical droughts forcing part of the population to emigrate. Thus the Beja of the eastern Sudan and the Masai of Kenya and Tanganyika are probably descendants of earlier waves which left Arabia before the beginning of history, while the Arabs belong to a historical wave dating from the seventh century A.D.

In both the Brown and Negro races the length of the skull is greater than its breadth, and they are therefore described as long-headed (*dolicho-cephalic*). They have other characteristics that are rarely observable by the



Map 2. North Africa



archaeologist, for he usually has to judge from bones only. Members of the Brown race have blackish wavy hair, while negroes have very short, tightly curling, hair; negroes also have an excess of pigment under the skin, which on exposure to the sun results in their characteristic 'black' colour. Hence the words 'negro' from the Latin *niger* 'black', 'Ethiopian' from Greek words meaning 'burnt face', and 'Sudan' (Arabic, see page 1). There are several sub-races of negro, which vary in stature and in the proportions of their skulls, but in all of them one unmistakable characteristic is the prognathism of the skull, which causes the upper lip to project. With this goes another characteristic, unusual width of nostril. It is probable that all the characteristics of the negro arise from adaptation to life in a hot climate, pigment being a direct protection against the rays of the sun, breadth of nostril being due to lack of need for the hot-air intake provided by the more specialized and narrowed nostril which has been evolved by other races forced to live in colder climates, while short curly hair and comparative hairlessness facilitate the dispersal of body heat.

The negro is probably an ancient race, which was once more widely dispersed than it is to-day. Not only does it occur all over tropical Africa, but there are traces of indigenous negro peoples still surviving in southern Arabia, India and Australasia. The negro has not yet been traced back into the Old Stone Age for certain, but the excavation by the Sudan Antiquities Service of the mound just north-east of the railway station in Khartoum<sup>1</sup> showed that it was a negro people who by making and using pottery took the first step towards civilization in the Sudan that we know of yet.

Their pots were apparently large brown bowls, some with a slightly pointed base, decorated by being combed

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1949 A.



on the outside with combs made from the spines of a small cat-fish (*Synodontis schal*, Arabic *gargār*) which is still caught in quantities near Khartoum. The decoration was clearly intended to make the pots look like baskets. The skulls of these people show that they differed from any negroes living to-day in having unusually large faces and massive jaws. And, while several tribes in the Sudan still remove their two lower incisor teeth in life, these inhabitants of early Khartoum sometimes removed the two *upper* incisors. This custom links them with early negroes whose skulls have been found at Asselar on the latitude of Dongola and roughly 2000 miles further west, and at Guir rather further west still, and also with non-negroid peoples such as those whose skulls have been found at Beni Segoual on the Gulf of Bougie, west of Tunis, and with the mesolithic Natufians of Palestine.

These early Khartoum negroes obtained their living by fishing and hunting. They supplemented their diet by gathering the fruits of wild trees, such as those of the *Celtis* tree (*Celtis integrifolia*: Sudan Arabic *labinga*), but there is no evidence that they cultivated any grain or kept any domestic animals. They lived on the edge of the Blue Nile which then rose about four and perhaps ten metres higher than it does when in flood to-day. The river probably then remained high for a much greater part of the year than it does to-day; for the vegetation-carpeted soil acted as a sponge which held up the waters of the rainy season, because less (if any) soil had been eroded away from the upper reaches of the river than is the case to-day, the profligacy of man in cutting down trees and carelessly causing bush fires having not then begun to take effect. One result of the flooding of their riverside camp was that the flood waters deposited lime on the fragments of bones of the animals and fish that they caught and ate; when each year the river fell the debris dried out and the lime

coating preserved the bones, so that we are able to find out what kinds of animals were living round Khartoum then. And as some of them are not the kind of animals that could live there now with the comparatively dry and rainless climate of to-day, we can see that the aspect of the country has changed considerably since then. How far this is due to climatic changes unconnected with the work of man, and how far it has been due to man having carelessly altered his environment for the worse by satisfying the needs of the moment, without thinking of his descendants yet to come, we must leave to future research. It is probable that both causes have been at work; but it is certain that the people who cut down trees, that would have gone on providing shade and soil cover for years, in order to give their animals one meal, and who allow goats to wander about uncontrolled and destroy every young tree that comes up, are condemning their own children to live in a land which will be nearer the desert than the one they themselves inherited.

The bones which the early Khartoum negroes left on their camp were mostly those of antelope and fish. But for the indiscriminate use of firearms and the consumption by large herds of domestic cattle of such grass as comes up in the rains, there would no doubt be more antelope in the vicinity of Khartoum than the few gazelle that survive to-day, but it is probable that there was more grass then owing to a greater rainfall (whatever the cause of the advance of desert conditions), or there would not have been such a high proportion of antelope (including buffalo) among the remains. And there was one kind of antelope, the Nile lechwe or Mrs Gray's cob which only lives in swampy country; and also other swamp-loving animals such as the water mongoose and the reed rat (Arabic *far el būs*).

Reed rats, as is well-known where they still live, are very good eating; and these reed rats of Khartoum are of considerable importance in our reconstruction of conditions in the Sudan in these early days. The nearest reed rats to Khartoum to-day survive along the Wadi Barei in western Darfur; but those that used to live in Khartoum belong to a species that has died out and become extinct. The Khartoum species is less closely related to the reed rats to be found to-day in western Darfur than it is to another species also extinct, the remains of which have been found on a similar site on the edge of a wadi running off the Ahaggar mountains, on the same latitude as Wadi Halfa and nearly 2000 miles west of it. This area is now quite desert, well inside the southern Sahara, but at the time of early Khartoum communication across it must have been easy for both man and animals.

We have just seen what it has been possible to deduce from the fragments of bone left on the mound on which the early Khartoum negroes lived. From their own bones we know not only that they were negroes, but that they buried their dead carefully in a recumbent position. In one grave a large piece of pot had been placed under the skull as a pillow. In another a young mother was buried with her child facing her. As some of the human bones were gnawed before they were fossilized, it seems probable that the site was only occupied at certain seasons of the year, and thus although the dead were buried under or near whatever habitations were used by the living (as they still are among many pagan tribes of the Sudan),<sup>1</sup> wild animals got at the corpses after burial. Wattle and daub was used in building their shelters, for we have found fragments of burnt clay that show impressions of reeds laid parallel and held together by pairs of ropes

<sup>1</sup> See *SNR*, ii, 139; iv, 210; v, 50, 123, 206; vi, 29, 159; vii (i) 17; (ii), 113; viii, 36, etc.; also Seligman, 1932, pp. 302-3.



plaited round them at intervals; but these shelters may have been no more than wind-screens such as the Nuer use to-day in their temporary camps.

Their stone knives and arrow-heads were of Capsian type. They speared fish and game with barbed bone spears (see fig. 2). They made no metal tools, but a form of iron in the shape of red ochre, which they collected from the hills of Nubian Sandstone in the vicinity, was of great importance to them, as it had been to men in the Late Old Stone Age, and as it still is to some tribes in the Nuba Mountains and the southern Sudan (see page 13). Many sandstone grinders were found which had been used for reducing the red ochre to powder, and it is probable that these sandstone ochre-grinders later developed into the saddle quern (Arabic *murhāka*) for the grinding of grain, as well as into the thinner and sometimes artistically decorated slate palette of predynastic Egypt.

The pottery combed with wavy lines that is characteristic of the early Khartoum negroes has been found in the Nile Valley at various sites between Karcima and Kosti, and at other sites both east and west of the Nile between Wadi Howar in the west and Kassala in the east. Where pottery was first invented is not yet known (see page 12). Whether it was invented in Africa or not, a few sherds not unlike some of those found at early Khartoum, have been found in Gamble's Cave in Kenya associated with Kenya Capsian stone implements. And since north Africa was not then as desiccated as it is to-day, it is probable that the knowledge of pot-making spread through the southern Libyan desert—early sherds have been brought in from sites in what is now 100 per cent desert north of the Wadi Howar in northern Darfur—and not only westwards to sites now in the southern Sahara, but through the Algerian plateaux eventually reaching Spain, and perhaps Sicily and Crete as well.

There are a number of places in the Nile Valley between the Sixth Cataract and Jebel Aulia where potsherds and stone implements markedly different from those left by the negroes of early Khartoum can be picked up on the low mounds where the Khartoum Neolithic people used to live on an early bank of the Nile four to five metres above its present high flood mark. One of these sites at Esh Shaheinab on the left bank about 30 miles north of Omdurman was excavated by the Sudan Antiquities Service in 1949.<sup>1</sup> The pottery which was now generally burnished (that is, polished by rubbing the almost dry pot with a smooth pebble before it was fired), developed out of the latest form of the pottery of the early Khartoum negroes. The basket-like decoration of the pots was now usually made with fragments of river mussel-shell instead of with combs made from cat-fish spines. Decoration of the rims of pots was considerably developed, and there were new wares which included black pottery, and fine bowls decorated with a black rim probably in imitation of gourd cups rather than of baskets. The dead were no longer buried in the settlement; indeed no cemeteries have been found, and it is not known how the Khartoum Neolithic people disposed of their corpses. They may have thrown them into the Nile or exposed them for the hyenas to eat. We do not know therefore whether the inhabitants belonged to the Negro or the Brown race; but it is probable that, since the pottery patterns are related to those made by the negroid people of early Khartoum, there was still at least a negroid element in the population, whose women had handed on the old tradition of decorating pottery.

Many beads were made from ostrich egg-shell and some from blue-green amazon stone which must have been brought from a distance, perhaps from Tibesti.

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1949 c, 1949 d and 1953 A.



The holes through the beads were made with small stone borers. Plugs worn in the lip were made of bone and also from zeolite pebbles that originated in the basalt of Abyssinia.

More use was made of the shell of river mussels than by the negroes of early Khartoum. Barbless fishhooks were now made from shell, an invention which the latter people seem not to have had.

Some of the stone implements, notably the crescents used for tipping arrows, are related to those from early



Fig. 1. Two stone 'gouges' from the Khartoum Neolithic

Scale 1:2

Khartoum, as are the sandstone ochre-grinders and sandstone rubbers, but new forms and new methods were also introduced. Stone axes and adzes were now given cutting edges by rubbing down on sandstone, after being roughly chipped into shape, and a new tool, the 'gouge', which was hafted in the same way as the axe, was also given some polish on the underside of the cutting edge. It is probable that these 'gouges' were used adze-fashion for hollowing out tree-trunks and making dug-out canoes, for the people must have needed some form of

water transport, to visit settlements on the other side of the river, to hunt hippopotamus and other water animals, and to fish. Bone axes and adzes with a polished cutting-edge like that of the stone examples were also used, possibly for getting the meat off large animals killed.

Harpoons with three or more barbs and a perforation through the butt took the place of the barbed bone spear-heads with grooves round the butt used by the negroes of early Khartoum. The closest parallels to this type of harpoon known come from the sites of early settlements of people who must have been leading a very

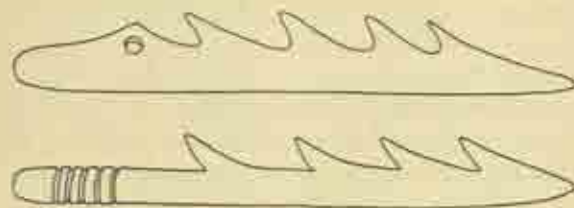


Fig. 2. Bone harpoon from the Khartoum Neolithic, and bone spear-head from Early Khartoum

Scale 1:2

similar life to that of the early inhabitants of Khartoum along the banks of a water-course known as the Wadi Azaouak, which is now dry and was probably once a permanent tributary of the River Niger, which it joins below Gao. These sites which are about 2000 miles west of Khartoum, are only about 200 miles south of the place where the closest relative of the extinct Khartoum reed rat was found. These facts can only mean that, while now owing to lack of water communication for man or wild animals across Africa from east to west on the latitude of Khartoum-Wadi Halfa is very nearly impossible—

nowadays man finds that easy route on the Kosti-El Fasher-Abeshr-Lake Chad line further south—in those early days the rainy season was sufficiently prolonged for man and animals to travel with ease between Khartoum and the Wadi Azaouak. They probably followed to some extent great watercourses that are now nearly perennially dry. The Wadi Howar in northern Darfur, the western Bahr el Ghazal which runs into Lake Chad from the north-east and the Wadi Tafessasset which runs into the same lake from the north-west after rising on the eastern slopes of the Ahaggar mountains, provided an almost continuous route from east to west for man and animals.

The Khartoum Neolithic people were still mainly hunters and fishers, but at any rate towards the end they had some domesticated animals, which represented about 2 per cent of the animal remains, and included a dwarf goat like that now common in the southern Sudan. The animal remains at Esh Shaheinab suggest a change in climatic conditions since early Khartoum. Instead of an annual rainfall of at least 800 mm. and swamps and grassy plains inhabited by Nile lechwe, reed rat, and water mongoose, it seems that in Neolithic times the country round Khartoum was steppe with patches of forest, with bush duiker, grivet monkey, giraffe, oryx, lion, hare, etc. occurring. There was still no trace of agriculture.

Rare granite mace-heads were now made from granite ochre-grinders; and occasional fragments of disk mace-heads (see Fig. 4) occur and are probably contemporary. It thus seems that the Khartoum Neolithic people may have invented this weapon, which is characteristic of the Early Predynastic culture of Egypt.

It is no doubt significant that many of the new features which occurred in the Khartoum Neolithic but had not

occurred at early Khartoum, also appear in a culture called the Fayum Neolithic, which is known from Miss

Caton-Thompson's excavations in the Fayum,<sup>1</sup> south-west of Cairo, about a thousand miles north of Khartoum. That culture is remarkable for developed stone arrowheads with recessed base and two long curving wings (see Fig. 3), flaked and partly polished stone celts and 'gouges', small barbed bone spear- or harpoon-heads, the cultivation of wheat which was stored in granaries dug in the earth and lined with matting, the domestication of animals, the weaving of linen cloth, the



Fig. 3. Stone arrow-head from the Fayum Neolithic

Scale 1:1

manufacture of beads from amazon stone, and burnished pottery. No burials of the Fayum Neolithic people have been found, so it is not known to what race they belonged, though a negro burial of uncertain date was found near one of their settlements.<sup>2</sup>

No finds from the Fayum Neolithic have yet been found in association with the other prehistoric cultures of Egypt, but it seems probable that it is earlier than any of the others now known (for which see page 17). Radio-carbon dating for this culture and for the Khartoum Neolithic make it appear possible that the two cultures were both existing about 3900 B.C. The following features are common to both cultures: increased use of hearths

<sup>1</sup> Described in Caton-Thompson and Gardner, 1934.

<sup>2</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 5 February 1938, p. 212.



and fire for cooking, disposal of the dead outside the settlement, domestication of some animals, grinding of stone tools, burnishing of pottery, and manufacture of beads from amazon stone. The absence of agriculture and evolved stone arrowheads from the Khartoum Neolithic suggests that it may be slightly the earlier culture of the two.

A stone industry similar to that of the Fayum Neolithic has been found in Ténéré south-west of Tibesti and south-east of the Ahaggar,<sup>1</sup> and also on the Wadi Azaouak sites mentioned above.<sup>2</sup> One of the two known sources of amazon stone is in the Egheï mountains to the north of Tibesti.<sup>3</sup> Stone 'gouges' have been found near Bilma, south-west of Tibesti,<sup>4</sup> and in south-eastern Tibesti with sherds of early incised pottery.<sup>5</sup> And Tibesti seems likely to have been the area from which spread the cultural ideas common to the Fayum, the Khartoum Neolithic and Ténéré; for their very distinctive stone 'gouges' have not been found in the Nile Valley between Shendi and Wadi Halfa, nor have they been reported from Egypt south of the Fayum; and the most reasonable hypothesis is that, when the Tibesti homelands began to dry up, an early wave of immigrants from there reached the Nile Valley in the Khartoum area, followed by later waves which went south-west to Ténéré and north-east to the Fayum.

Nothing very definite is known yet about the period between 3800 and 3100 B.C. in the Sudan, when the predynastic civilizations of Egypt were flourishing. The earliest of them, probably later than the Fayum Neolithic,

<sup>1</sup> Vaufray and Joubert, 1943-6.

<sup>2</sup> Kelley, 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Monod, 1948 A, pp. 153-4.

<sup>4</sup> Noel, 1917, pp. 351-68.

<sup>5</sup> Dalloni, 1936, pp. 183-5 and 205.

is named the Badarian culture (see page 17). It has similar stone arrow-heads to those found in the Fayum Neolithic settlements, and remarkable fine thin pottery, which was decorated with rippling produced by combing and then burnishing with a smooth pebble before firing, the pots frequently having their rims and interiors blackened by being placed upside down on green leaves or chaff when taken red hot from the kiln. The Badarians were a short, slender, and delicately built people with narrow heads, a branch of the Brown race with just a hint of negroid about them. Their pottery is probably descended from the combed pottery made by the negroes of early Khartoum and the Khartoum Neolithic people. This is the natural conclusion to be drawn from the pottery of the Khartoum Neolithic excavated at Esh Shaheinab. As well as combed pottery that culture included pottery which had been burnished after being given incised or impressed patterns. A little more burnishing of some of the pots, that had parallel lines incised on them before being burnished to such an extent that the lines were partly obliterated, would have produced the 'ripple ware' typical of the Badarian culture.

More scientific study of the many ancient sites that are to be found a few metres above present high Nile along the White Nile from above Renk to Khartoum, where combed ware is also found, and also along the Blue Nile, the Nile north of Khartoum and the River Atbara, and along the foothills of the Red Sea Hills, will have to be made before we can assess the part which the Sudan played in the rise of civilization. We have seen that it may have been making pottery before pottery was made in Egypt. One of the characteristic objects of the Early Predynastic (Amratian) culture of Egypt, the keeled stone disk mace-head, probably developed out of the sandstone grinders which the early negroes of Khartoum

used for grinding red ochre. These grinders developed a keel and also at times a high polish from the grinding of ochre, and eventually they became perforated when repeatedly pitted on either side, to roughen the polished



Fig. 4. Stone mace-heads: from the Khartoum Neolithic (left) and from the Early Predynastic

Scale 1:4

grinding face. When perforated they were probably used on sticks as club heads. Certainly fragments of disk mace-heads made from beautiful black and white variegated stone, as they are in predynastic Egypt, can be found on Khartoum Neolithic sites along the Nile near Khartoum. Fragments of small black pottery saucers carefully decorated with incised patterns on either side can also be found on early occupation sites; see for example *Early Khartoum*, pl. 89. Specimens of these saucers, which must have been imported from the Sudan, have been found in predynastic graves in Upper Egypt.

The extremely rocky nature of the country along the river in Wadi Halfa district and the country usually called Nubia between Wadi Halfa and Aswan, and the increasing desiccation of the surrounding country, no doubt made communications difficult between Egypt and the Sudan even in these early days; although we have seen that there is good reason to think that the desiccation was not so severe then as it is to-day. And whatever may have been the whole story, geographical reasons are probably sufficient to account for the fact that the predynastic civilizations of Egypt, though they may at first



have originated in the Neolithic civilization of the Sudan, appear to have penetrated only a comparatively short distance back into rocky Nubia. None of the painted pottery characteristic of the Egyptian Predynastic has been found in the Sudan. The Archaeological Survey of Nubia,<sup>1</sup> carried out before the original heightening of the Aswan dam, found only one typical Amratian (Nagada I) cemetery upstream of the First Cataract, and that only a few miles south of the cataract. And the most southerly cemetery of the Gerzean (Nagada II) culture that they found was one on the west bank opposite the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi, which contained a little of the typical Decorated pottery.

Dating however approximately from 3100 B.C. a more numerous and widely distributed group of graves were found in Nubia at every large centre of population by the same excavators, who called these people the 'A Group'. The pots and copper tools imported from Egypt, that have been found in their graves, show these graves to have been contemporary with the First Dynasty there. Like the people associated with the predynastic civilizations in Egypt, the A Group people also belonged to the Brown or Mediterranean race, whose representatives to-day stretch from the Ababda in the north to the Somalis in the south. Only two cemeteries of the A Group people have been scientifically excavated in the Sudan, and they are at Faras<sup>2</sup> north of Wadi Halfa and Gemai<sup>3</sup> south of Wadi Halfa, but sherds of typical A Group pottery have been picked up further south at Amara East and on Sai Island, and a pot, indistinguishable except in size from one found in an A Group grave at Faras, was found in

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1910, pp. 114 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, 1921, pp. 1-18.

<sup>3</sup> Bates and Dunham, 1927.



a grave near Omdurman Bridge<sup>1</sup> during the recent war, and with it was other pottery hitherto unknown but clearly related. This ware had been combed and then burnished, leaving traces of the original combing as ripples, as in the ware characteristic of the earlier Badarian culture in Egypt. When the distribution of this pottery is fully known, it will throw light on the history of both Egypt and the Sudan in the fourth millennium B.C. It has been found in a grave at Grassy Valley in the Libyan Desert,<sup>2</sup> and sherds of it have been picked up at Kassala in the eastern Sudan and at Qoz Regeb on the River Atbara between Kassala and the junction of the Atbara with the Nile; and two pots of this ware were found in late Gerzean graves at Nagada in Upper Egypt. It must have been highly prized to have travelled so far and lasted so long. Its occurrence in the eastern Sudan on a route to Upper Egypt still used occasionally by camel thieves, suggests that future research may show that it was there that the pottery of the Khartoum Neolithic, that was burnished after having a pattern incised on it, first developed into the true rippled pottery typical of Badari. The Libyan Desert grave may be an offshoot of the A Group people of the Nile Valley near the Second Cataract; for no trace of this pottery has been found in Kharga Oasis, and it presumably would have been found there by Miss Caton-Thompson<sup>3</sup> if it had come to Badari from the west. It is one of two forms of fine thin native ware found in the A Group graves along with pots with 'wavy ledge' handles and deep conical jars of hard pink ware that had been imported from Egypt. The other form of fine pottery typical of the A Group has a black burnished interior, and the exterior decorated with patterns

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1949 A, pp. 99-106 and plates 91-100.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw, 1936 A.

<sup>3</sup> Caton-Thompson, 1952.

in a dark slip applied to a light red background, or made by covering the pot all over with the slip and then removing it in places.

The copper tools found in the A Group graves at Faras are the earliest metal tools so far found in the Sudan. They were of copper cast in open moulds and no doubt came from Egypt; but a few small copper tools were found in Egypt in earlier graves, and it is possible that small copper objects may have reached the Sudan by means of trade (? from the east) before 3100 B.C.

The Egyptian objects found in the A Group graves at Faras were dated to the reigns of the third and fourth



Fig. 5. Inscription of King Jer on Jebel Sheikh Suliman

kings of the First Dynasty of Egypt, Jer and Waji. And recently a scene cut on a slab of sandstone on the top of Jebel Sheikh Suliman to the south of Wadi Halfa on the west bank of the Nile—just behind what must have been the Egyptian depôt of Iken in the Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom (see page 58)—has been identified as a record of the conquest of the Shellal-Wadi Halfa reach by King Jer.<sup>1</sup> The scene (Fig. 5) has been in part obliterated by graffiti, some of which date from the Middle Kingdom, but there can still be seen to-day a boat with the high prow and vertical stern typical of the First

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1950 A, pp. 27-30.

Dynasty and believed to originate in Iraq (see page 14), below which float several corpses in the water, and from the prow of which a rope binds the larger figure of a captive chief. At the extreme left of the scene is the name of King Jer and a figure with hands bound behind its back holding the peculiar bow that is the hieroglyph for Zeti the earliest name of Nubia, possibly derived from the ceremonial use of such a bow by the Nubians. This bow is still used in the southern Sudan in dances at Nuer weddings and carried by Dinka witch-doctors; and modern examples can be seen in the Khartoum Museum. The sign  $\int$  occurs also on an ebony tablet from the reign of King Hor-Aha, the predecessor of King Jer, which apparently records the capture of a number of prisoners in Nubia.<sup>1</sup>

It seems probable that for a time Nubia was peaceful and flourishing after the conquest by King Jer, and that the A Group settlements date from that period. But the A Group came to a more or less abrupt end,<sup>2</sup> although there was some continuity observable in the impoverished graves of the B Group people who succeeded them. The pots imported from Egypt and the fine ware special to the country in the A Group period died out. The communities had not only ceased to advance but there had been retrogression. How far this was due to hostile action by Egypt and how far to isolation from external influences is not yet clear. But from the Second Dynasty (c. 2800 B.C.) we have another record of hostile action taken by the dynastic Egyptians against the people living south of the First Cataract. A fragment of inscribed stone from Hierakonpolis shows King Khasekhemui<sup>3</sup> kneeling on a prisoner representing Nubia, for above his head is the

<sup>1</sup> Petrie, 1901, p. 20 and pl. iii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, 1912, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Quibell and Green, 1902, pl. lviii and pp. 47-8.



sign [ *zeti*, and on the Palermo Stone<sup>1</sup> it is stated of King Seneferu of the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2720 B.C.), the father of the builder of the Great Pyramid of Giza, that he destroyed Ta Nehesi 'the Land of the Southerners' (the name Nehesi very probably surviving to-day in that of the Mahas of Dongola) and captured 7000 prisoners and 200,000 cattle and sheep. This expansion of the Egyptians southward beyond their natural frontier at the First Cataract caused them to appear to their southern neighbours as a cruel and mighty people whose superior weapons and organization rendered them invincible. There were probably one or two futile attempts at resistance with the results recorded on the Palermo Stone, and then the tender flower of civilization that seemed to be springing up under the A Group wilted away. A few miserable people remained inhabiting their ancestral homes; but the more spirited either died in battle or moved away out of the reach of Egyptian military expeditions.

During the Fourth Dynasty (c. 2723-2563 B.C.) the diorite quarries west of Tumās and Abu Simbel were opened up to obtain material for the statues that the Egyptians now placed in royal tombs. Inscriptions of Khufu (Cheops) the builder of the Great Pyramid at Giza, Dedefre, and Sa'hure, second king of the Fifth Dynasty (c. 2563-2423 B.C.), have been found at the quarries, and of Sa'hure, and of Teti and Pepi I, kings of the Sixth Dynasty (c. 2423-2242 B.C.), at Tumās. One concludes from these inscriptions that no resistance was made by the local Nubians to the quarrying activities of the Egyptians, although two identical inscriptions of Mernere, the last king but one of the Sixth Dynasty, found near the First Cataract, make it clear that that dynasty made no attempt to push the frontier south of the First Cataract, despite

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, I, § 146.



quarrying activities and other expeditions south of it. These inscriptions record how the king came and received the submission of the chiefs of Medju (? modern Beja), Irtet and Wawat,<sup>1</sup> names which presumably indicate tribes or districts south of the First Cataract.

The inscription of Uni, the governor of the South, at Abydos in Upper Egypt records how King Mernere sent Uni to make canals through the First Cataract and to build boats of wood from Wawat, and how the chiefs of Irtet, Wawat, Yam and Medju brought the timber, and the work was completed in a year. The boats were used to take large granite blocks north for the king's pyramid. It is clear from all this that the Sixth Dynasty were taking an increasing interest in the south.

Uni also records that the army which he led against the Asiatic Beduins contained Nehesi soldiers from Irtet, Medju, Yam, Wawat and Ka'u as well as from Temch. This must mean that all these places or peoples were in contact with the Egyptians, and indeed the fact that all except Ka'u and Temch brought timber for boat-building suggests that they were (with these two exceptions perhaps) situated in the Nile Valley.

Caravan leaders of the Sixth Dynasty have left inscriptions on their tombs on the west bank at Aswan—called Yebu by the ancient Egyptians and Elephantine by the Greeks, both names meaning 'Elephant land'—which make references to the Sudan, but it is difficult to interpret them with confidence. Harkhuf, the greatest of these caravan leaders, recorded how he made four journeys to the 'Land of Yam', thereby opening up new country. Three of these journeys<sup>2</sup> were made under King Mernere and the last under King Pepi II. On the first his father and he were sent 'to explore a road to Yam', and they

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, I, §§ 316-18.

<sup>2</sup> Breasted, 1906, I, §§ 333-5.

did it in seven months. On the second journey he was sent alone, starting out 'by the Elephantine road' and coming back through Irtet, Mekher and Tereres, having been away for eight months. On his third journey Harkhuf found that the chief of Yam had gone to the land of Temeh 'to smite Temeh as far as the western corner of heaven', and he went after him as far as the land of Temeh and pacified him. He came back from this expedition with 300 donkeys laden with incense, ebony, leopard-skins, ivory, etc. and was conducted by an escort from Yam through the territory of Irtet, Setu and Wawat, who seem to have been united under a single chief and to have been inclined to be hostile to the Egyptians. On his fourth expedition Harkhuf brought back from the land of Yam a dancing dwarf to the great delight of the young King Pepi II, a copy of whose letter instructing Harkhuf to take care that the dwarf reached the court safely, is inscribed on his tomb.

Because Harkhuf's journeys took periods of over six months and were made with large numbers of donkeys—on one occasion three hundred—it is improbable that they followed the Nile, as it is usually assumed that they did, for it would have been easier to travel by boat, as far as the Second Cataract at any rate, than to ride through the rocks and sand drifts along the river; boats too would have been much better for the transport of goods to be traded or brought back in exchange. These caravans must have left the Nile at Aswan 'by the Elephantine road', and one route is likely to have been *via* the oases of Dunqūl and Selfma, and so by the Derib el Arba'in ('Forty Days Road' from Asyut to El Fasher) to Darfur (see page 214). We shall see in the next chapter in considering the origins of the C Group, the next people who appear in the Nile Valley in Nubia, that there are some reasons for thinking that the name Temeh

may still survive in that of the modern Tama, whose country is now in north-eastern Wadai (west of northern Darfur and slightly south of the latitude of Khartoum), and that some of the Temeh may at one time have lived along the Wadi Howar, in between the present Tama country and the Nile Valley between Wadi Halfa and Aswan, where the C Group settled. Irtet, another place or people mentioned in Harkhuf's travels, may well have been a group of Nubians living west of the Nile Valley also, although nearer the First Cataract than Yam. The name may just possibly still survive in that of the Urti, who now live in the north of Jebel Meidob (in northern Darfur and on the latitude of Khartoum), and who speak a Nubian dialect; but it is not at present suggested that the Irtet were living in Sixth Dynasty times as far west as Jebel Meidob. Various causes may have driven the remnants of them further west in the intervening centuries. Harkhuf brought back ebony, ivory and frankincense from Yam. All of these could have been obtained in Darfur; and even if the intervening country was as desert as it is now—and it probably was not—it would be possible to travel to-day by the Derib el Arba'in with 300 good donkeys, 100 carrying goods, 100 forage and 100 water.<sup>1</sup> And donkeys can be trained to do with short rations of water in between wells.

In the account of the third of Harkhuf's journeys, relations between the Egyptians and the people of Irtet, Setu and Wawat seem to be deteriorating; and in the tomb of Pepi-nakht, another nobleman of Elephantine, who held the office of 'keeper of the door of the south' under King Pepi II, we read how he led what must have been a punitive expedition against these people. On the first expedition he was sent by the king to 'hack up Wawat and Irtet', and he did so, killing many and

<sup>1</sup> Seligman, 1934, pp. 67-78.

taking prisoners as well; while on the second expedition, being sent to pacify these countries, he succeeded in his object and brought the chiefs to court.

The power of the central government in Egypt collapsed at the end of the very long reign of Pepi II (c. 2242 B.C.), and the effect of this collapse on the relations between Egypt and their neighbours to the south is clear from the *Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage*, Ipu-ur, in which it is stated that the special oils that had come from the south in trade no longer reached Egypt, and it is also mentioned that the Nehesi, Temehu and Medju (? Mahas, Tama and Beja) were dangers to Egypt, where they had apparently been employed as soldiers, and, in the absence of strong central control, had begun to prey with impunity on the land that had employed them.



## The Coming of the C Group People to Nubia (c. 2300-2150 B.C.)

It was probably the lack of a strong government in Egypt at the end of the Sixth Dynasty that encouraged the entry into Lower Nubia of a people from the south who were labelled 'the C Group' by the Archaeological Survey of Nubia, and whose original name is still unknown. This event may have taken place at any time between the end of the Sixth Dynasty and the rise of the Eleventh Dynasty in what is known to Egyptologists as the First Intermediate Period (c. 2240-2150 B.C.). The punitive expedition of Pepi-nakht, mentioned at the end of the last chapter, may have so weakened the previous inhabitants of Lower Nubia, the A Group and their descendants, that it facilitated the entry of the C Group people. It is, however, quite possible that the C Group were related, physically and culturally, to the A Group. Physically both peoples belonged to the Brown or Mediterranean race, and despite published statements to the contrary, there were

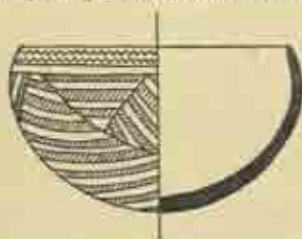


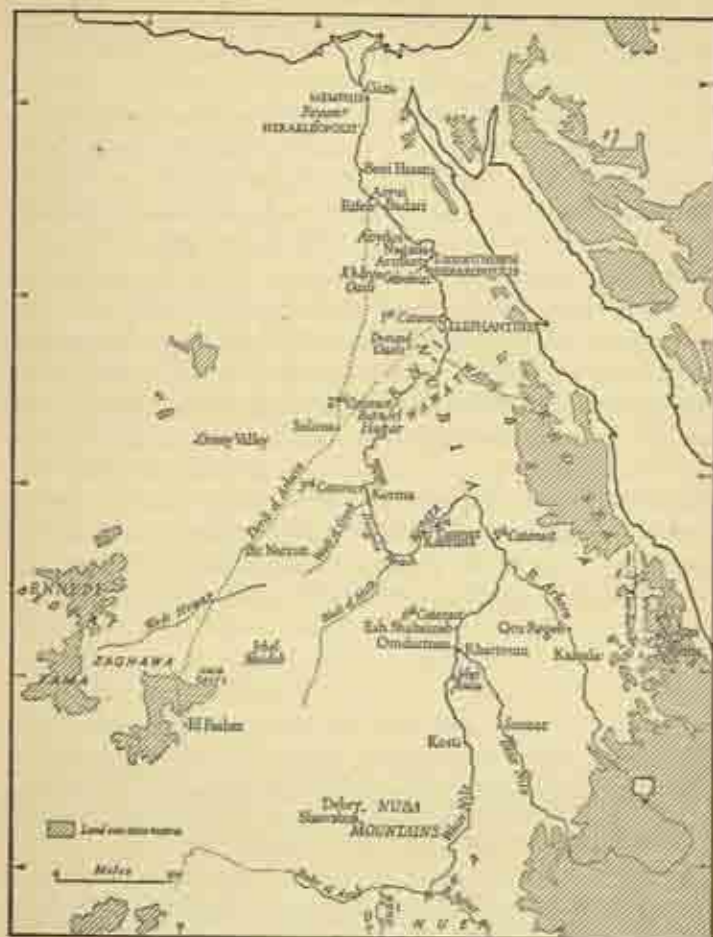
Fig. 6. Typical C Group bowl  
Scale 1:4

only the slightest negroid characteristics in any of the C Group skulls.<sup>1</sup> Culturally the black incised bowls typical of the C Group (see Fig. 6) are related to the rare black incised bowls, etc., from the Predynastic period in Egypt<sup>2</sup>; and two black pots now in the Khartoum

Museum (Antiquities Collection nos. 3793/10 and

<sup>1</sup> Junker, 1921 A; Steindorff, 1935, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, 1921, pls. xxvi, xxvii.



Map 3. The Nile Valley before 1580 B.C.

3793/20) which were found in a grave near Omdurman Bridge, despite their different shape, clearly from their incised pattern belong to the same pottery family. Another pot found in the same grave, although from so much further south, is related to the A Group pots found at Faras near Wadi Halfa<sup>1</sup>; and it is thus likely that the C Group were related to the A Group people, but came from somewhere well south of the Second Cataract where they developed their characteristic pottery.<sup>2</sup> Their home before they came to Nubia may not have been in the Nile Valley. Traces of their culture appear to have been found both far to the west and to the east of the Nile. In Nubia they were more or less sedentary cattle-owners. Bones of cattle and goats were found at Aniba in the only C Group living site that has been excavated so far. They often buried the heads of cattle and goats ceremonially outside their graves. These heads were no doubt those of animals slaughtered at the funeral feast; and actual sheep, and more often clay models of cattle, sheep and goats, were also buried in their graves, to provide the dead man in the after-life with what he considered most valuable and necessary in this life. The C Group people also sometimes scratched outlines of their long-horned cattle on their pots or on the great stone pillars which at one period they erected

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1949 A, pl. 93, figs. 5-6, and pp. 99-104.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, 1912, p. 11 pointed out that C Group pottery had some relation to the Early Dynastic incised ware. The distribution of the Predynastic black incised ware is not yet known but it was probably wide. Both it and the Omdurman Bridge pots just mentioned probably derive from the pottery of the Khartoum Neolithic, see Arkell, 1953 A, p. 193 and Arkell, 1953 B, where it will be seen that a peculiar rim decorative pattern, No. 32, also occurs on black incised bowls from Nagada (Petrie and Quibell, 1896, pl. xxx, 2 and 20), Sequence Dates 38 and 51, and on a sherd from tomb group 1863 (Sequence Date 46) now in University College, London.

beside their graves.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested that these pillars had the magical purpose of ensuring a supply of milk for the dead.<sup>2</sup> Far away at Lemqader in Mauritania (western Sahara) are tumuli with similar stone pillars on which are also engraved cattle.<sup>3</sup> It will be interesting to see, when these tumuli are excavated, whether there is any cultural connection between them and the C Group.

The fact that the C Group people could keep a considerable number of cattle in Lower Nubia, where desert conditions are so severe to-day that the owner of an ox-driven water-wheel has difficulty in keeping one or two beasts alive throughout the year, indicates that desiccation has increased in this latitude since the third millennium B.C. To keep cattle in the numbers that the C Group people did, there must have been sufficient rain in the rainy season to provide grazing grounds outside the river valley; and it is by no means impossible that it was the increasing desiccation of their old homelands, wherever they were, and where conditions till then had probably resembled those in present day northern Kordofan, that brought the C Group people into the Nile Valley in Nubia from the steppe country either west or east of it. The west is the more probable. If Lemqader is too far away, pots and potsherds have been brought in from Wadi Howar, between Darfur and the Libyan Desert, which are connected with C Group pots.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that the C Group were a branch of the southern Libyan Temehu (p. 43), of whom another branch may have moved south-west to north-eastern Wadai to give rise to the modern Tama. There are

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, 1921, viii, pl. x.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, 1915, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Monod, 1937, pp. 249-50 and Monod, 1948 n, pp. 30-2 and fig. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Holcher, 1937, p. 56 and Newbold, 1924, pp. 54, 59.



colonies of Tama at El Fasher, Omdurman and elsewhere in the central Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whose women earn their living as potters. This tribe has a tradition that they once lived in the vicinity of Bir Natrun, which is now desert. To-day they are partly negroid ; but besides this tradition there are a number of Nubian words in the Tama language to suggest that they may in the past have lived nearer Nubia. Their mat-impressed pottery is of a style that is well known in the Sudan since Late Meroitic times (the last 1600 years, see p. 169 ff.), but it seems that it may have had its origin in C Group pottery. Some C Group pots are decorated with incised zigzag lines round the neck, a decorative motif which is typical of modern Tama pots.<sup>1</sup> The prototype of this motif is almost certainly the leather thong by which a basketwork neck with a lid is attached to the gourd body of the almost unbreakable containers for water and milk made, for example, by the Umm Galul nomads of northern Darfur.<sup>2</sup> The Umm Galul, like the Tama, have a tradition of having once lived further north in what is now desert, and though known as Arabs, they may well be in origin eastern Libyans rather than immigrants from Arabia. Pottery is too fragile to be useful to nomads, and the Umm Galul do not use it, although for sedentaries a pot is as efficient a container as a basket and is made much more quickly.

C Group pottery changed little after their arrival in Lower Nubia; they must therefore have become potters at an earlier stage. But that they had not long given up being nomads, or were still perhaps semi-nomadic as are tribes like the Zaghawa of northern Darfur to-day, is suggested by the way in which their graves developed. On arrival they buried their dead in simple stone ring

<sup>1</sup> Firth, 1915, pls. 33 and 35 g and Arkell, 1939, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of these Umm Galul vessels may be seen in the Khartoum Museum.

graves with a mere cavity for the corpse, while later they made well-built graves with a stone-lined chamber instead of a simple hole, the latest and most developed tombs having also a chapel for offerings on the east side (see Fig. 7).

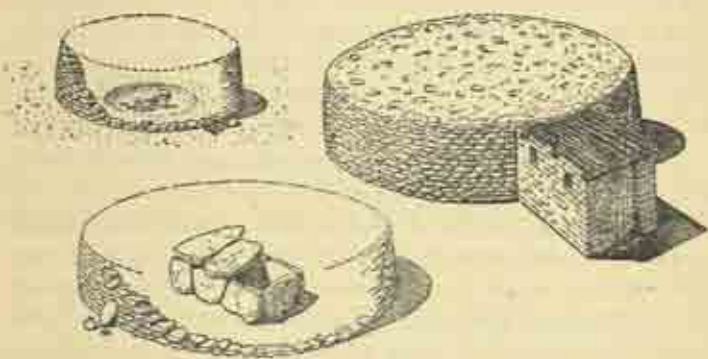


Fig. 7. Typical C Group graves (after Steindorff)

There are in the Khartoum Museum sherds from old living sites near Jebel Kokan on the edge of the Khor Baraka at Agordat in Eritrea, which resemble sherds characteristic of Late C Group in Lower Nubia.<sup>1</sup> With these sherds were found two-lugged polished stone axe-heads that are probably contemporary, some being of the elongated shape typical of the Seventeenth Dynasty.<sup>2</sup> The most probable explanation at present seems to be that something caused some of the C Group people to leave Lower Nubia, perhaps at the beginning of the Middle Kingdom *c.* 2000 B.C. (see next chapter). This event may have been the military occupation of Nubia

<sup>1</sup> See my forthcoming article in *Kush*, no. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Petrie, 1917, pl. ii, figs. 84, 85. There are also sherds of a peculiar C Group ware found at Aniba; see Steindorff, 1935, pl. 91 (170).

by the Eleventh Dynasty (2160-2000 B.C.) or by the first kings of the Twelfth Dynasty, or it may have been the increasing desiccation of Lower Nubia. As grazing for flocks and herds became too scarce within reach of the Nile, it would have been natural for herdsmen to retreat *via* that natural road the Wadi Allagi, which they must frequently have explored from their homes in Lower Nubia, to the Red Sea Hills further south, where the Beja live to-day. The Beja are probably the descendants of the Medju of the Ancient Egyptian inscriptions, and are certainly related to the Brown race nomads who once lived on the southern fringes of the Libyan desert, and whose descendants are found to-day among the Bedyat of Ennedi north west of Darfur, the Meidob of northern Darfur, and some of the Nubian-speaking inhabitants of the northern hills of the Nuba Mountains of southern Kordofan. Thanks to the effect on the climate of the proximity of the Red Sea Hills to the Red Sea there is still just enough precipitation to produce grazing for the Beja east of the Nile, although the country west of the Nile now supports no flocks or herds north of the Khartoum-northern Darfur latitude. Pre-moslem stone graves that must be descended from C Group graves (Fig. 7) are widespread in Beja country,<sup>1</sup> but no modern Beja pottery appears to be related to that of the C Group, whereas there is pottery in the south-west, for instance in certain of the Nuba Mountains such as Shawabna and Debry,<sup>2</sup> which must represent a survival of C Group pottery into the present day. So that it seems likely that it was only a branch of the original people who settled on the Nile in Lower Nubia, some of them reaching the Red Sea Hills. Other branches which went south survive weakly

<sup>1</sup> Schweinfurth, 1922, pp. 269-89.

<sup>2</sup> See examples in the Khartoum Museum; also Bentley and Crowfoot, 1924, pp. 18 ff.



to-day in the Nuba Mountains; and as we have seen, it may have been their main body which moved south-west and is represented by the Tama of north-eastern Wadai.

It is very difficult to attribute ancient rock pictures to any particular culture, but it is probable, judging from the similarity of the style to the representations of cattle on C Group pots and grave pillars, and the comparative proximity of C Group cemeteries, that at least some of the rock pictures of cattle in Nubia and Wadi Halfa district (Pl. 1*b*) are the work of the C Group people.

They were dependent on the skins of animals for their garments which were of leather. Only small pieces of linen were found in their graves as wrapping for imported copper mirrors. Their beads, bracelets and other personal ornaments were mostly made of shell, bone or stone, and were probably all home-made, since they have a character of their own, while Red Sea shells were obtained, probably like the occasional copper dagger, copper mirror or Egyptian beads, from itinerant merchants.

The relations between the C Group people and the ancient Egyptians have been interpreted in various ways. At first it was thought<sup>1</sup> that they were a peaceful people who settled under the protection of the Middle Kingdom forts in Lower Nubia and cultivated all available land. On further consideration, however, the absence of weapons in their graves may be accounted for, not so much by their peaceful nature as by the scarcity of metal or by peculiar burial customs.<sup>2</sup> The excavation of their cemetery at Kubanieh north of Kom Ombo has shown that the C Group people arrived in Lower Nubia long before the beginning of the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2000 B.C.), and so probably before any of the Egyptian forts were built

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1923 B, iv-v, p. 555; Emery and Kirwan, 1935, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 40.



there. Kubanieh<sup>1</sup> is their most northerly known settlement, and it was presumably the place where they were prevented from advancing further into Egypt by the Eleventh Dynasty princes of Thebes, for whom see the next chapter. The end of the cemetery at Kubanieh is dated to the middle of the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 1850 B.C.). It is also to be noticed that when Senusret I, the second king of the Twelfth Dynasty (*c.* 1970-1936 B.C.), began to occupy Lower Nubia, he had to make a military expedition to do so; this makes it appear likely that C Group resistance had to be overcome. The scarcity of imported Egyptian objects in C Group graves has already been noted.<sup>2</sup> A few Egyptian pots and faience beads occur in early C Group graves, but they could have been obtained from itinerant merchants, and the main pottery is resistant to Egyptian influence, all the more so—it has been suggested<sup>3</sup>—as definite opposition to Egypt gradually developed with the rise of the Eleventh Dynasty (*c.* 2150 B.C.), after which the steady efforts of the Antefs and Mentuhoteps to conquer Nubia and hold it down must have brought to an end the peaceful exchange of goods. And even later still, when the power of the Thirteenth Dynasty waned (*c.* 1700 B.C.), the Egyptian forts in Nubia were all destroyed by fire, which suggests that the inhabitants were still at heart hostile to the Egyptian occupation, and that they took the chance to destroy the strong points of the hated invader, when he became weak enough to let them do so. It is thus more likely that, instead of the C Group settling in the shadow of the Egyptian forts in Lower Nubia, those forts, especially those of Ikkur-Kubban at the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi, Aniba and Faras, were sited so as to keep the C Group under control.

<sup>1</sup> Junker, 1920, pp. 35 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, pp. 40 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Junker, 1923, pp. 11 ff; Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, pp. 41-2.

#### CHAPTER IV

### The Egyptian Occupation of Nubia in the Middle Kingdom

(2150-1580 B.C.)

WE saw in the last chapter that it was more probably the weakness than the strength of Egypt that brought the C Group people to settle in Lower Nubia, and that their settlement took place in the dark age known as the First Intermediate Period (c. 2300-2150 B.C.). After the fall of the Sixth Dynasty (c. 2300 B.C.), shadowy kings ruled at Memphis (near Cairo), the Seventh and Eighth Dynasties, but the real power was held by the rulers of Herakleopolis, which is just upstream of the Fayum (Ninth and Tenth Dynasties). They controlled all southern Egypt but not Memphis or the Delta. Then later the princely family of Opē (known to the Greeks as Thebes; the modern Luxor) made themselves independent of Herakleopolis and usurped control of Upper Egypt as far north as, but not including, Asyut. These princes of Thebes eventually overthrew both the rulers of Asyut and Herakleopolis, and finally of Memphis and the Delta, and so the Theban Eleventh Dynasty arose, the founders of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom.

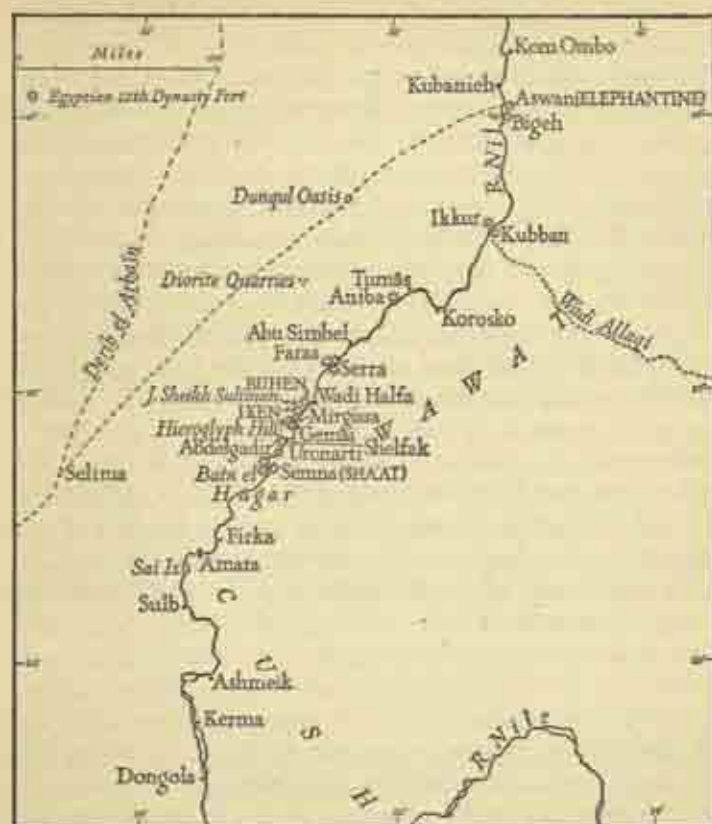
It is doubtful whether the Herakleopolites ever directly controlled the southern frontier of Egypt. An inscription at the First Cataract mentioning one of their kings, Meri ib Re' (c. 2242-2200 B.C.) was probably made by a Theban prince who acknowledged the suzerainty of Herakleopolis.

Another inscription which comes from Thebes and appears to date from the First Intermediate Period records

how an officer called Jemy made Wawat (in Nubia) tributary to the nome-prince (of Thebes). This may have been the record of an expedition which only exacted a single payment, but it suggests that it was the Thebans who controlled the southern frontier of Egypt, as does the inscription of the nome-prince Antef of Thebes, who speaks of 'controlling the southern gateway'. This Antef was a predecessor of King Antef I of the Eleventh Dynasty (c. 2160-2150 B.C.), and so perhaps a contemporary of the officer Jemy. This nome-prince Antef called himself 'the great pillar beloved of the Two Lands', a title which shows that the princes of Thebes already were ambitiously thinking of making themselves independent of Herakleopolis. Rock inscriptions of two kings (one called Sa Re' Antef), who seem to precede the Eleventh Dynasty, have also been found at various places in Lower Nubia; and it now appears possible that Nubia as far as Wadi Halfa and the Second Cataract may have been permanently occupied by the Eleventh Dynasty.

Mentuhotep I (c. 2085-2065 B.C.) of that Dynasty on a fragment from his temple at Gebelein upstream of Armant is represented as striking down four enemies, who appear to be Egyptians, Nubians, Asiatics and Libyans. Then there is a rock inscription of Mentuhotep III (c. 2060-2010 B.C.) near the First Cataract which speaks of a river expedition with 'ships to Wawat' in Nubia in the forty-first year of the king's reign; while Mentuhotep V (c. 2008-2000 B.C.) reinstituted the office of 'keeper of the door of the south'. It is even probable that Amenemhat I (c. 2000-1970 B.C.), the founder of the Twelfth Dynasty and a scion of the princely family of Amenemhat the vizier of Mentuhotep III (c. 2060-2010 B.C.), had Nubian blood in his veins.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Petrograd papyrus 1116 A recto: see Junker, 1921 A, p. 124 n.; Winlock, 1940, p. 119.



Map 4. Nubia before 1580 B.C.



Recent study of evidence<sup>1</sup> from the Wadi Halfa area makes it seem possible that at least as far as the Second Cataract the occupation of Nubia by the Eleventh Dynasty was permanent. About six miles west of Abd el gadir village just downstream of the Second Cataract and well out in the desert there are two small isolated hills of sandstone which appear to have been quarried in ancient times. On one of these hills are a number of graffiti in hieroglyphic and hieratic, which date from the Middle Kingdom, and one graffito, which from the archaic style of its writing may date from the Old Kingdom. One mentions the quarrying of stone for offering tables. On another small sandstone hill known as Jebel Sheikh Suliman north of Abd el gadir village and about half a mile west of the ancient site now known as Kor, that must have been the Egyptian base of Iken (see p. 39), there are other hieratic graffiti referring to two masters of the hounds and other officials. In the graffiti from these hills the names of Antef, Mentuhotep and Sebekhotep<sup>2</sup> recur, names that are normally associated with the Eleventh Dynasty, and since they were employed on such settled pursuits as quarrying stone for offering tables, hunting and clerical work, it seems possible that the graffiti witness to the occupation of Nubia as far as the Second Cataract by the Eleventh Dynasty.

If there is any doubt about the reality of the occupation by the Eleventh Dynasty of the Wadi Halfa-Shellal reach, it is certain that the more go-ahead kings of that dynasty at least sent expeditions which exacted temporary payments of tribute from the inhabitants of that reach;

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, 1910, pp. 261-2; Arkell, 1950 A, pp. 25 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Lyons, 1900-1901, p. 428 records hieratic graffiti with the names of Mentuhotep, Sebekhotep and Amenemhab 'seen in hills round Buhen'. This probably refers to graffiti recently rediscovered on Jebel Turob.

and the Twelfth Dynasty effectively occupied the whole country as far as Semna, where they fixed the frontier. Semna is a naturally strong position, where the road along the west bank passes close to a rocky bar across the river, and where there was enough alluvial soil to support a garrison and a small town. Here were built two forts on the west bank, to control the road and protect the frontier town, and one fort on the east bank (Pl. 2a), which rendered the position virtually impregnable and ensured effective supervision of traffic by river as well as by land. That this permanent occupation was begun by the first king of the dynasty, Amenemhat I (c. 2000-1970 B.C.) who, as we have seen, may have been the son of a Nehesi (Nubian) woman, is clear from several sources. There is a rock inscription near Korosko, which says 'in the 29th year of King Amenemhat [I] we came to overthrow Wawat'. There are inscriptions of this king at the diorite quarries behind Abu Simbel which suggest peaceful activities in Lower Nubia, but in the *Teaching of Amenemhat*<sup>1</sup> the old king himself is reported as saying 'I seized the people of Wawat [? Wadi Halfa district] and captured the people of Medju [? Beja]'.

We have already seen<sup>2</sup> that it was probably the resistance of the C Group people that necessitated the military occupation of Nubia. This occupation was completed by Senusret I the son of Amenemhat I. An inscribed stela (a large stone inscribed slab with a rounded top like a modern gravestone) was set up in the northern temple at Buhen (opposite Wadi Halfa) by an officer called Mentuhotep in the eighteenth year of Senusret I, on which the king stands facing the god Montu, lord of Thebes (Luxor), who says 'I have put all countries in Ta Pedet [an early name for Nubia] under thy feet', and

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, I, § 483.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 3.

the god is presenting him with a line of bound captives symbolizing Nubian tribes or towns. The head and shoulders of each captive surmount an oval containing the name of the town or people represented (cp. Pls. 6*b* and 8*b*). These include Cush (one of the earliest mentions of the name), Sha'at and Shemyk. The Eighteenth Dynasty temple of Tuthmosis III at Semna East has an inscription on it which says it was built of the good white stone of Sha'at, which must have been near Semna (itself called Khekh by the ancient Egyptians); and the name Shemyk perhaps indicates Uronarti north of Semna (p. 76), although it may possibly survive in modern Ashmeik downstream of the Third Cataract. It is clear from this stele of Buhen that the conquests of Senusret I had already reached (and perhaps passed) the southern limit which was later on demarcated and fortified by Senusret III.

The fact that this inscription was set up at Buhen, where are still remains of the massive mud-brick wall of a Middle Kingdom fort, suggests that a fort had already been built there by the time the officer Mentuhotep set up his inscription. Archaeological finds from Kubban on the east bank, just downstream of the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi, suggest that a fort had been built there by Senusret I, and it is probable that some at least of the other forts of Lower Nubia were constructed in his reign.

Fourteen forts in all were constructed in Nubia during the Middle Kingdom, and both the number of the forts and the care which was taken to render them impregnable leave no doubt that they were intended to overawe and hold down a potentially hostile native population. They fall naturally into two groups, those built on the navigable reach between Shellal and Wadi Halfa, intended to control the C Group people, and six more all situated on a rocky stretch of river between the Second Cataract



and Semna, intended to protect boats when in difficulties among the rocks and to hold the frontier. The forts of the first group are situated in more or less flat alluvial country, as would only naturally be the case if they were sited to control pre-existing centres of habitation. The two chief aims of the designers of this group of forts were to enclose as much space as possible and to provide safe harbours. They are therefore, if not square, often built in a rectangular shape with the long side facing the river. The strongest fortifications are always on the land side, because attack from the river was unlikely, the Egyptians no doubt having full control of the waterway. The fortifications on the landward side always followed the same general principle. Round the site was a glacis, usually of mud-brick, to prevent the enemy taking cover in holes, and inside the glacis was a dry ditch revetted with stone. That this ditch was frequently lined with mud-brick shows that it was not filled with water. Then came a low fore-wall strengthened with bastions. Inside this was a narrow way, and then a higher and stronger main wall, often with tower-like projections, which being the most massive parts of the forts are usually the highest surviving parts of the ruins to-day. Behind the main wall a narrow street ran round the inside of the fort to enable troops to move rapidly to any part that might be threatened by attackers. Inside this street that went round under the walls were houses for the commandant and soldiers, a store and treasury, and probably a shrine or temple. Each fort seems to have been an administrative unit dealing direct with the office of the vizier and other central Egyptian authorities, but that there was direct communication between the forts is proved by finding seals from the forts at Semna, Shelfak, Iken and Buhen inside the fort at Uronarti. All the seals found date from the



early Thirteenth Dynasty, but no doubt the system was the same in the Twelfth Dynasty.

A remarkable papyrus found in the late Middle Kingdom tomb beneath the Ramesseum at Thebes by Sir Flinders Petrie gives a list of fourteen forts.<sup>1</sup> Yebu can be confidently identified as Elephantine and Senmet as Bigeh, both in the First Cataract area. Bāki is the fortress of Kubban on the east bank just downstream of the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi. Only a few miles north of Kubban just across the river is the sister fort of Ikkur,<sup>2</sup> which was probably counted as a single unit with Kubban and so is not mentioned on the list. Ma'am is the modern Aniba,<sup>3</sup> and then come two forts between Aniba and Buhen which have not been identified for certain. They are Hesef-Medju 'Repressing the Medju' and Ink-tawi 'Embracing the two lands'. The two forts are at Faras just inside the present frontier and at Serra East, close to the railway line from Wadi Halfa to Faras. If the Medju are, as seems probable, the Beja nomads of the eastern desert, Serra East is likely to be the fort 'Repressing the Medju'. The only Middle Kingdom fort that has been identified so far at Faras is the small one excavated by the late Professor and Mrs Griffith,<sup>4</sup> the slight remains of which, with the stone quay at which boats used to moor, are now high and dry in the desert on the west bank of the abandoned western channel of the Nile. 'Embracing the two lands' is no more suitable a name for it than for the

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, 1916. See also Borchardt, 1923, and Reisner, 1923 B, iv-v, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Firth, 1912, pp. 22 ff., came to the conclusion on no very certain evidence that the oldest and smallest fort, which had round bastions on the outside of the walls, dated from the Old Kingdom; whereas it is more probable that both it and the later enlarged fort date from the Middle Kingdom: Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, pp. 30-1.

<sup>3</sup> Steindorff, 1937, pp. 2 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Griffith, 1921, p. 80.

fort at Serra East, but it is by no means improbable that there was in Middle Kingdom times another fort at Faras on what must have been an island then, under the mound which Griffith called the Citadel, where he found many fragments from two New Kingdom temples (see p. 93) as well as later Meroitic fortifications. A fort on an island could well be said to 'embrace two lands', being between the land on either bank, and the small fort on the west bank may well have been a subsidiary fort, with the same relation to the other fort as Ikkur had to Kubban. In any case the width of the river at Faras would have made it necessary to have two forts to control traffic effectively, just as in 1948 the Sudan Government police post on the east bank had to have a subsidiary post on the west bank.

Buhen is the well known site almost opposite Wadi Halfa already mentioned (p. 59); and the Iken of the list, that is also mentioned in the Semna stela of Senusret III (see p. 75), must have been situated at the end of the navigable reach and just downstream of the Second Cataract, where there is to-day along the river bank just north of Abd el gadir village an extensive but much eroded ancient site, now locally known as Kor, which 'consists of a fortified area enclosed with walls that have rounded bastions on the landward side. It stretches along the river bank for about a mile,<sup>1</sup> having presumably been enlarged in New Kingdom times when used by Tuthmosis I as the base for his conquest of Cush (the Dongola Reach, see p. 82). The main function of the Egyptian settlement at Iken must have been that of a *dépôt* where the larger boats that had sailed up from the First Cataract discharged their cargo, which was then loaded onto smaller boats for the journey through the rocks and shoals that stretch as far as Kerma beyond the Third Cataract.

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, 1916, p. 163 and pl. 27, and Arkell, 1930 A, p. 27.

The remaining six forts are all situated within a rocky stretch of thirty miles of river, between the Second Cataract and Semna, where navigation was impossible for the large boats used between the First Cataract and Iken. They comprise (from south to north) the three forts at Semna for the defence of the frontier, Uronarti on an island within sight of Semna, Shelfak on the west bank downstream of Uronarti and within sight of it when the walls of both forts stood at their full height, and Mirgissa on the west bank a few miles upstream of Iken at the entrance to the Second Cataract, with a sister fort possibly contemporary with it opposite it on an island.

All this group of forts was probably built by Senusret III, in which case it was not unnatural that in the New Kingdom (see next chapter) he should be worshipped in this area as the divine conqueror of Cush with his cult-centre at Semna (Pl. 4a) although more probably his predecessor Senuaset I was the original conqueror. In contrast with the forts in Lower Nubia, in the Second Cataract area the shape of each fort is determined by the nature of the ground; and they are so sited that the foot of the walls was only reached after a laborious climb, and that there was no neighbouring height overlooking the fort from which arrows could be shot into the fort. All rocky ridges near the fort itself had high walls built out on them, so that at Uronarti for example the fort seems to be little more than one long great wall, with the narrow fort inside it. Where the ground fell away steeply, the fore-wall was omitted as unnecessary. In forts built on a rocky eminence there is usually a special gate to the water-stair, the head of which is protected with stonework, as at Semna, Uronarti, Mirgissa and Kubban.

There was a temple in each fort, probably originally constructed of mud-brick, although usually replaced in the New Kingdom by a small temple built of sandstone.



Traces of the earlier mud-brick cult-building were found at Uronarti, being identified by the discovery in it of ten model loaves of wood inscribed with the date of the 33rd year of Amenemhat III<sup>1</sup>.

The main entrance to the fort was usually guarded by high flanking walls with towers, and closed by two massive wooden doors. The great fort walls were built of large sun-dried mud-bricks, about  $32 \times 8 \times 15$  cm. in size, having logs of wood laid at frequent intervals in the masonry both parallel to the face of the wall and also at right angles to it. The amount of wood used varied from fort to fort, and probably depended on the amount of wood available or the whim of the architect. The main wall was usually built with roughly square buttresses on the outside, as at Uronarti. Access to the ramparts was by stairway on the inside of the wall.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from this description of them that the Second Cataract forts were intended primarily for defence, and there is very little doubt that they were impregnable in their day. They were close enough to reinforce one another in case of need; and they were built so as to be defensible by small bodies of men, so that at any time part of the garrison in each fort should have been available for other than garrison duties, *e.g.* dragging ships through shoals. For not only were there supplies for the garrisons of the forts for the small boats to bring from Iken (and from which consignments so many clay seal-impressions were found in the forts by the Harvard-Boston expedition

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1931, p. 5. Examples are now in the Khartoum Museum.

<sup>2</sup> The excavations at Shelfak and Mirgissa forts have not been published; but there is a short account of that at Shelfak in Wheeler, 1932. There is what seems to be an unusually early occurrence of red brick—or perhaps rather of thick burned tiles—in the flooring of the commandant's house at Mirgissa and in a street of the fort at Shelfak. Purposely burned bricks of Middle Kingdom date are also reported from Kerma in Reisner, 1923 II, p. 29.



which excavated them), but there were cargoes of trade goods intended for exchange for products of the south at Kerma. Such goods must have tempted the penurious tribesmen who maintained their independence in the rocky country on either side of the river. Although the hinterland of the west bank is now too waterless to support any human habitation, there are traces of villages and graves there, and it must have been inhabited or two forts would not have been needed on the west bank at Semna. This inhabitation, together with the fact of the river levels (Pl. 26) being 26 feet above those of the present day at Semna and the presence of the C Group cattle in Lower Nubia, indicates a climate rather less dry than at the present day and a denser population. The tribesmen no doubt swooped down and robbed boats which got into difficulties in the shoals. In addition to their primary function of defending the frontier, these southern forts had to protect the river traffic and supervise the local tribes.

The great strength of the forts, indicating that their primary purpose was the defence of the frontier, alone renders it illogical to accept Reisner's interpretation of the archaeological evidence at Kerma, and to believe with him that that place was the residence of a line of Egyptian governors-general, of whom the first was the well-known Hepzefa of Asyut. For Kerma lies 150 miles south of Semna as the crow flies, and considerably further as the sailing boat travels round bends in the river. For the first third of the distance the river runs through the Batn el Hagar ('the Belly of the Rocks') where there are no known antiquities of the Dynastic period except the inscription made at Tangur on the expedition of Tuthmosis I. Here the difficulties of navigation caused by rocks and shoals are increased by the fact that the river runs almost at right angles to the prevailing north-west

wind. Then at Firka one comes out on to a stretch where there is some alluvial soil to cultivate and the river runs due east and west, until after Amara it again bends due south and runs past the island of Sai. In the Firka area there are rock pictures of cattle and people that suggest the C Group (Pl. 1*b*), and similar rock pictures are found sporadically all the way to the Third Cataract. At various places between Firka and Sulb sites have been found where the sherds indicate that in this area it should be possible to work out the connections between the C Group and the Nubian culture of Kerma. In Sai Island are some large low burial mounds covered with black and white pebbles that are related to the even larger mounds at Kerma, which Reisner excavated and thought were those where Hepzefa and his successors as governors-general of Cush were buried in Nubian (non-Egyptian) fashion. South of Sai Island is the reach on which in the New Kingdom temples were built at Sadenga, Sulb and Sesibi, and the great Nauri decree was inscribed on a rock by the river overlooking an alluvial plain. Then after more navigational difficulties due to the rocks of the Third Cataract, one comes out eventually past the grey granite quarries of Tumbus, into the reach that is easily navigable, except for difficulties with the wind on the great bend which the river makes, so that while it is flowing north at the Third Cataract it is flowing south at the Fourth Cataract. All along the comparatively easily navigable section of the Nile now known as the Dongola Reach there is more cultivable alluvial soil than anywhere between it and the First Cataract. Near the downstream end of the reach, about two kilometres from the river, on what is now the right bank of the river, and on what was probably an island 4000 years ago (with the high Nile flood reaching about as high as the land now irrigated by the Borgeig pump) is a remarkable solid block of

mud-brick known as the Western Deffufa (Pl. 3a).<sup>1</sup> This mass of mud-brick was apparently built to Egyptian measurements, originally 100 cubits by 50 cubits; and the method of construction is typical Middle Kingdom style with large mud-bricks and logs built into the wall to strengthen it. There are traces of a stairway and of a room part of the way up, but erosion has removed the whole of the top of the mass, where the living rooms and stores once were. It was subsequently enlarged by an eastern wing in the same form of building. On both the east and west sides at the base of this mass of mud-brick Reisner found a complex of rooms, which must have interfered with the purpose of the original construction. This was to render impregnable the trading post situated on top of it; but erosion of the surrounding country has been so severe that there may have been defence walls protecting the buildings at the back of the fort that have since entirely disappeared.

Under the main mass there are traces of older walls, and some of the building in the western complex is early. Associated with these earlier walls Reisner found a number of fragments of broken alabaster vases of the cylindrical form that was common in the Old Kingdom, and on which the cartouches of Pepy I and Pepy II of the Sixth Dynasty occurred together with one example each of the Twelfth Dynasty kings Amenemhat I and Senusret I. On these grounds Reisner concluded that



Fig. 8. Egyptian alabaster vase with the name of King Pepy I. Scale 1:4

<sup>1</sup> 'Deffufa' seems to be derived from an arabicized plural of the Nubian word *diffi*, which means an ancient mound site; ? cp. Sudan Arabic *debbu*.



there had been an original Sixth Dynasty trading post at Kerma, but the occurrence of the Twelfth Dynasty fragments with those from the Old Kingdom indicates that it is more probable that Old Kingdom jars that had gone out of fashion were being traded to the natives of Cush during the Middle Kingdom, or even later.

Junker<sup>1</sup> has given good reasons for thinking that this was not the fort from which an Egyptian governor-general and his occupation troops ruled the surrounding country and collected what products they wanted as tribute. As a fort it was too small, for it could only have held a small garrison of between fifty and a hundred men, and also it was too far from the nearest Egyptian stronghold at Semna, where the frontier of the Egyptian occupied territory was fixed in no unmistakeable terms by the stelae of Senusret III<sup>2</sup> (see p. 75). In the rooms around the Western Deffufa were found raw materials (graphite, haematite, copper oxide, resin, mica, rock crystal, carnelian and ostrich egg-shell), partly manufactured objects (glazed quartz, faience vessels and beads), over-fired pottery and clay seal-impressions from baskets and pots, all indicating that trade rather than administration had been the purpose of the fortified post. Two miles further east across what must have been the eastern branch of the river in Middle Kingdom times, is the Eastern Deffufa, another large mass of mud-brick, and an extensive cemetery, both also excavated by Reisner and providing the evidence which he interpreted as indicating that at Kerma a line of Egyptian governors-general had been buried in un-Egyptian fashion. Neither burial on a bed nor the sacrifice of wives at the funeral

<sup>1</sup> Junker, 1921 n.

<sup>2</sup> That from Uronarti is now on view in the Khartoum Museum. See also Breasted, 1906, i, §§ 651-660, and Janssen, 1953, pp. 51-5.



were Egyptian customs. Yet the method of burial in these large graves was the normal fashion in Nubia at that time, magnified as it was at Kerma to a grandiose degree. While ordinarily a Nubian of some standing at this time was buried on a bed along with one or two wives and a ram, at Kerma the main burial, which lay on a bed in the central chamber of the large mound graves, was accompanied by from 200 to 300 other people, mostly women and children, who had been buried alive in a corridor which ran right through the mound past the central chamber. The mound was given its shape by many low walls of mud-brick running at right angles to the central corridor.

The Eastern Deffufa (Pl. 3*b*) was a funerary chapel in mud-brick much larger than, but presumably in origin not unconnected with, the small mud-brick chapels which were erected on the east side of the later C Group graves in Lower Nubia (see Fig. 7). Near this funerary chapel was found in fragments an important inscribed stone, describing how the king's 'Sole Companion' Antef in the 33rd year of the reign of Amenemhat III (c. 1816 B.C.) had been sent to repair a building in Inebuw-Amenemhat maat heru ('The Walls of Amenemhat of blessed memory') and had completed the work. The building repaired must have been the funerary chapel, and the 'Walls of Amenemhat' must have been the name of the trading post at Kerma, indicating that it had been built in the reign of Amenemhat I or Amenemhat II, probably the latter (c. 1938-1904 B.C.)

In the central corridor of the large burial mound (Pl. 3*b*) nearest the Eastern Deffufa was found the complete statue of the lady Sennuwy<sup>1</sup> wife of the prince of Asyut, Hepzefa, the contracts for the endowment of whose

<sup>1</sup> See Reisner, 1923 B, iv, pl. 31, or Smith, 1946, fig. 49.

tomb at Asyut are known.<sup>1</sup> The lower part of a life-size statue of Hepzefa himself<sup>2</sup> was also found in debris in a compartment near the central burial chamber of the same mound. Fragments of other statues and statuettes of Egyptian officials and kings were found that had come or seem to have come from the central corridor in this and other large burial mounds, including a small statuette of Sekhemre-Khuwtawy (? the 15th king of the Thirteenth Dynasty, c. 1785 B.C.), a statuette of Senusret III, and a fragment with perhaps part of the name of another king of the Thirteenth Dynasty; and Reisner, without any petrological examination of the stone from which the statues were made, concluded that they were all made of local stone, and that therefore (although no inscription in Egypt has any reference to such an appointment) Hepzefa must have been a governor-general of the south who had resided so long in Nubia that his harem, largely composed of Nubian women, had insisted on his being buried there in Nubian fashion, and that this custom had then continued with successive governors-general for perhaps two centuries—all this despite the known fact that Egyptians still looked with horror on being buried in a foreign land, and that these supposed governors-general must have had to control the country from a small fort situated far in front of the frontier forts of Semna, with which communication must have been difficult.

Reisner admitted the difficulty of the *royal* statues, for he did not maintain that there were any royal burials at Kerma, but despite the difficulty, he did not realize—what has since been realized by Junker, Säve-Söderbergh and others—that the statues found at Kerma must have been Egyptian statues re-used, and probably re-used (like the Old Kingdom alabaster vases) at a comparatively

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, i, §§ 535 ff.

<sup>2</sup> At present in the Museum at Merowe.

late date, i.e. during the Second Intermediate Period, when they were presumably traded by Egyptian merchants to the native princes of Cush.<sup>1</sup> We have seen (p. 60) that one of the earliest mentions of the name 'Cush', the name later assumed by the Twenty-fifth Dynasty kingdom of the northern Sudan with its capital at Napata (Jebel Barkal), was on the stela at Buhen recording the conquest of various Nubian 'towns' by Senusret I. There is also the inscription of Amenī, one of the princes of Beni Hasan in Middle Egypt, which says that he accompanied Senusret I and passed Cush, sailing southwards and that his majesty returned safely having overthrown his enemies in Cush; and how later he (Amenī) brought back gold from the south with an escort of 400 men, indicating that by then the Nile Valley in Nubia was comparatively pacified.<sup>2</sup> The importance of the native chieftains at Kerma indicates that this is probably the original location of Cush, the most important native kingdom in the northern Sudan.

We have seen (p. 70), that the fortified trading post was probably built by Amenemhat II, whose father Senusret I completed the conquest of Nubia. For eighty years after the reign of Senusret I, there was peace in Nubia; and from the reign of Amenemhat II comes also the mortuary stela of Si-hathor of Abydos, which appears to record how he went to Nubia and forced the chiefs to wash gold. It is possibly also to the same king that is due some building activity at the upstream end of the Dongola Reach, which gave rise to a settlement, probably another

<sup>1</sup> A burial which contained Kerma ware found near Luxor was dated by Petrie as late as the Seventeenth Dynasty; see Petrie, 1909, pp. 6-10.

<sup>2</sup> For the hieroglyphic graffito of Amenī (Imeny)—possibly the same man—in the Second Cataract area see Arkell, 1950 A, p. 26 and p. 31.



trading post, called the City of Amenemhat, mentioned on a fragment of inscribed stone from a now vanished temple, built into the medieval fort at Merowe East, and now in the Khartoum Museum (Antiquities Collection, no. 5772).<sup>1</sup>

The inscription of the Antef who came to repair the Eastern Deffufa at Kerma in the reign of Amenemhat III indicates that the Egyptian government continued to take an interest in this trading post. The isolated position of this post, and the prosperity of the native graves, as these large mounds no doubt are, show that Egyptians (after the original conquest of Senusret I) settled there as peaceful traders, and that the natives benefited from this trade. Reisner's excavation of the later graves at Kerma has not yet been published, but in the graves published<sup>2</sup> degeneration has already set in—indeed, as so often in Africa, the highest degree of civilization is at the beginning, when the outside influence that introduces it is strongest; afterwards there is a long period of gradual degeneration.

The manufactures of Kerma are striking products of culture contact.<sup>3</sup> The pottery, as usual, is of the greatest archaeological importance. The highly polished black-topped red beakers are an improvement on the black-topped red ware of Nubia, and are at their finest at the beginning of the period (Fig. 9). The carpentry of the beds is typical Egyptian, but the forms differ from any found in Egypt, the Kerma beds being unique in having footboards decorated with patterns of inlaid ivory figures. Similarly the mica figures of animals, birds, etc., on the leather caps worn by the women are a product of culture contact, the leather caps being Nubian, while

<sup>1</sup> Lepsius, 1897-1913, v, pp. 282-3.

<sup>2</sup> For further details see Reisner, 1923 n.



at least the creative idea behind the mica figures was Egyptian. The copper daggers, too, of Kerma owe their characteristic large flat-topped ivory handles to the local ample supply of ivory, though they were no doubt made by Egyptian craftsmen. 130 of these copper daggers were



Fig. 9. Typical Kerma Beaker. Scale 1:4

found at Kerma—more, comments Reisner, than were found in all Egypt in all ancient periods.<sup>1</sup> Copper vessels were also made locally, for they include copies of the beaker form of the black-topped red pottery. There was a considerable local industry in which blue glazed faience was made into tiles, inlays, vessels, beads, amulets, models of boats, animal figures, bracelets, mace-heads and ear-studs—in fact larger quantities of such ornamental objects were found at Kerma than have been found on any site in Egypt. Many of the faience vessels were decorated with patterns in black line, among which there are some striking animal motifs. Objects were made from quartz and covered with a blue glaze, the most plentiful being spherical beads, but besides small figures and vessels, even such a *tour-de-force* as a glazed quartz bed was made early in the history of the settlement.

The alabaster pots were probably all imported from Egypt, as the stone is Egyptian, and the styles typical of Egypt between Dynasties V and XIII—so too with the kohl (antimony) pots, seals and scarabs. But they are comparatively small exceptions to the many local products of the skill of the Egyptian craftsmen, who must have

<sup>1</sup> Examples may be seen in the Khartoum Museum and the British Museum.

found the incentive to create original objects to appeal to native taste in the supply of local products which they received in exchange for such wares.

There is an inscription cut on the rocks near Aswan which records how one Hapu came at the beginning of the reign of Senusret III to make an inspection of the fortresses of Wawat, suggesting that such inspections were a matter of periodical routine. It is not clear what caused Senusret III to resume military operations in Nubia, after a peaceful interval of about eighty years. The prosperity of this period may have led some tribe to raid Lower Nubia—the modern Sudanese have a saying that there is no drunkenness worse than that which comes from drinking too deeply of the milk of prosperity; Reisner suggests<sup>1</sup> that nomads may have interfered with the trade route between Semna and Kerma; or it may have been a rising of the C Group people, whom Sæve-Söderbergh<sup>2</sup> thinks responsible for the burning of the earliest fort at Aniba. In preparation for this expedition Senusret III cleared a channel for boats carrying his troops through the First Cataract, and repaired this channel again in the eighth year of his reign, as two inscriptions on the rocks there record. In the same year he repaired the fort at Elephantine and set up a stela at Semna West, forbidding any southerner (Nehesi) to pass Semna unless on diplomatic business or on his way to trade at Iken. Another expedition in the 12th year of the king is recorded briefly on the rocks at Aswan, where it is stated that his majesty had arrived to overthrow Cush; and again in his 16th year an expedition is recorded on two stelae, one found at Semna West, and the other (almost a duplicate of the first) at Uronarti (Gezirat el Melik); on the latter the construction of the

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1923 II, iv-v, p. 549.

<sup>2</sup> Sæve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 84.

fort at Uronarti (under the name 'Repulse of the Inu') is recorded; and on both stelae the fixing of the frontier at Semna (Khekh) is reaffirmed. Another expedition seems to have been made in the following year, for the block with the inscription<sup>1</sup> from the stone-built quay at the foot of the long stairway up from the river to the fort at Uronarti records navigational difficulties due to low river at Ishmūk on the king's return from overthrowing Cush. This expedition by boat shows that the inhabitants of the Nile Valley somewhere upstream of Semna had been giving trouble, although the mention of wells as a military objective on the second Semna stela of Senusret III and the siting of the forts in the Second Cataract area, suggest that the nomadic or semi-nomadic tribes east or west of the Nile were the chief enemies in this area at that time.

After the reign of Senusret III there seems to have been another period of peace in Nubia. There are many inscriptions at Semna recording the height of the Nile flood (Pl. 26) during the reign of Amenemhat III, and most of the Egyptian type graves found at Buhen and Aniba date from his reign and from that of Amenemhat IV, suggesting that Egyptians were at last beginning to settle in Nubia near the forts. The rarity of Egyptian graves in Nubia during the Middle Kingdom is probably due to the fact that to the Egyptian even Lower Nubia was still a foreign land, and so whenever possible Egyptian corpses were taken back to Egypt for burial. Far more Egyptian officials must have visited and worked in Nubia than were buried there. Many of them left records in funerary inscriptions in Egypt or graffiti on the rocks of Nubia recording their visits. A man from Elephantine said 'I have made many expeditions upstream to Cush';

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Khartoum Museum (Antiquities Collection, no. 2683). See Wheeler, 1932, p. 257, and Janssen, 1953.



and an official from Abydos recorded how he had been sent by the king to explore Cush. Many military officers and officials are mentioned, and we find titles such as 'overseer of Nubians' and 'overseer of the court of justice'. How many of these were Egyptians is not clearly stated, but it is probable that in the Middle Kingdom all the more important officials were Egyptians, although there was no considerable immigration of Egyptian settlers. If there had been such an immigration as some people think, the native Nubian culture would have been destroyed, but this did not happen. That the C Group people continued to flourish is clear from the excavations at Aniba and elsewhere. These people were only slightly influenced by contact with Egyptian culture. In the main the character of their native culture remained unchanged. Perhaps after the beginning of the Middle Kingdom the imports of small luxury objects became more frequent. Copper mirrors occur throughout the C Group period, but purely Egyptian copper daggers are not found at Aniba in Nubian graves until well into the Twelfth Dynasty, and most of them date from the period that follows it.

It is clear from seal-impressions found there that the Egyptian trading post at Kerma continued to function well into the Hyksos period, for the seals include a number of Hyksos royal names. But like the forts of the Second Cataract region, the trading post was finally destroyed by fire, presumably at the end of the Hyksos period and before the beginning of the New Kingdom, when once again the Egyptians had to use military force to reoccupy Lower and Upper Nubia.

To Egyptologists the period between the end of the Twelfth Dynasty and the rise of the Eighteenth Dynasty is known as the Second Intermediate Period (c. 1780-1580 B.C.), and so little is known about its history that it



is indeed a dark age. Yet the general state of affairs in Nubia can be reconstructed from archaeological finds. We know from the Harvard-Boston excavations that (at the beginning of this period) the forts were still occupied under the Thirteenth Dynasty, and that therefore they must have been receiving reinforcements from Egypt. The colonies around forts like Buhen and Aniba continued to flourish; but cultural stagnation had set in.

Presumably the collapse of the Thirteenth Dynasty was due to the advance of the Hyksos, but that trade with the south continued and was protected by the Hyksos is the only explanation possible of Hyksos seal-impressions found at Kerma; and if their power was felt at Kerma, it must have been felt all the more in Lower Nubia. It was however in Upper Egypt that resistance to the Hyksos crystallized; and the struggle between the Hyksos and the princes of Thebes who eventually became the Seventeenth Dynasty must have resulted in the temporary weakening of the external power of Egypt and the collapse of her trade with the south.

The C Group probably long continued to resist cultural egyptianization; and the eventual egyptianization of Nubia during the Second Intermediate Period was probably due to Egypt's loss of political control over Nubia rather than to any strength on her part. The Pan-graves of Egypt—cemeteries of some people from the northern Sudan whose home has not yet been exactly located<sup>1</sup>—which have been found as far north as Rifeh near Asyut, must have been the burial places of mercenaries who were employed by the Seventeenth Dynasty to help them in their struggle against the Hyksos. It is probable that these Sudanese warriors played a decisive

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was further south than has been realized. Pan-grave pottery has been found at Khartoum, see Arkell, 1949 A, pl. 90, fig. 3, and some of the pottery from Agordat, see p. 51 n, is also Pan-grave.

part in the struggle. A quantity of gold objects were found in their graves, suggesting that they were well-paid soldiers. Their weapons (bow, axe and dagger) are all Egyptian—indeed they must have been more or less completely egyptianized. The return of such men, who had served successfully in Egypt, to their independent native land must have resulted in bringing into fashion there the Egyptian culture which they had absorbed in Egypt; for there was by then no political fear of Egypt to inhibit its adoption. This may have been one of the factors which reduced C Group resistance to the new expansion policy of an Egypt re-created by the Eighteenth Dynasty; and the cultural unity of Nubia with Egypt, which developed during the Second Intermediate Period, must have weakened any opposition on the part of the Nubians to the return of their Egyptian masters.

## CHAPTER V

### The Northern Sudan under the Egyptian New Kingdom

(1580-c.1050 B.C.)

*The frontier of Egypt advanced south of the  
Fourth Cataract*

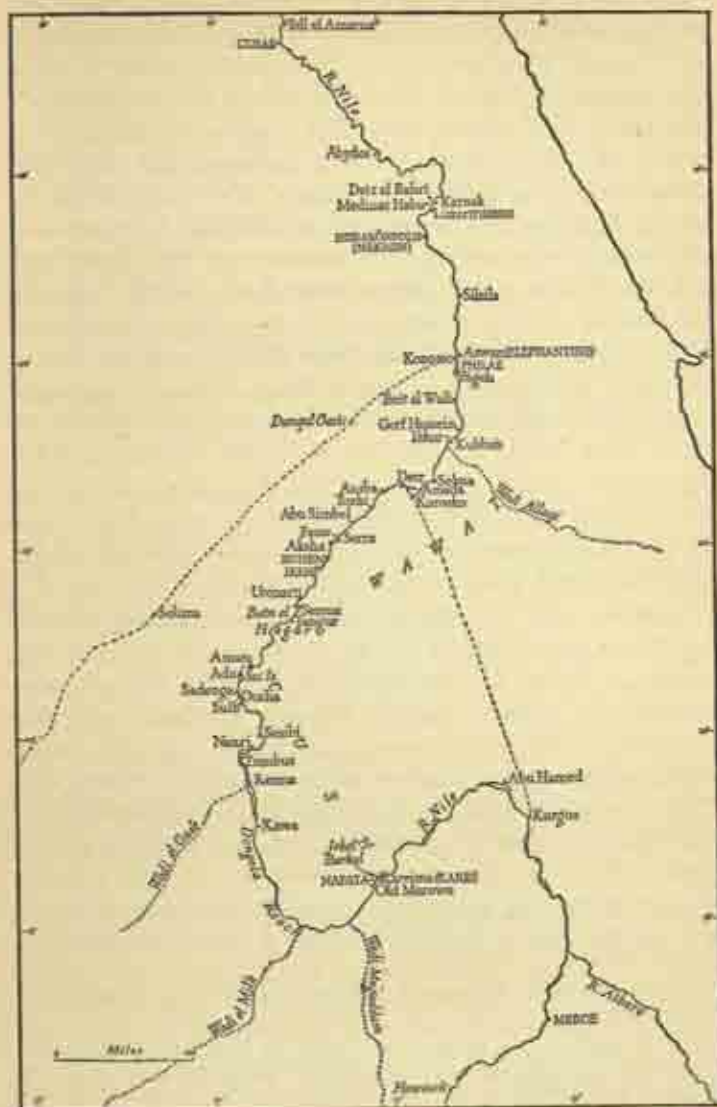
THE re-occupation of Nubia and the extension of the southern frontier of Egypt to a point upstream of the Fourth Cataract was part of the movement of expansion which began with the national rising against the Hyksos and their pursuit into Asia, and ended in the acquisition of an empire more extensive than was held by Egypt at any other time.

The tablet of Kames, the last king of the Seventeenth Dynasty, which was discovered at Thebes<sup>1</sup>, describes how he found himself situated between a prince in Avaris (Hyksos) and a prince in Cush (perhaps the descendant of the chief of Kerma); it also states that the Asiatics (Hyksos) only ruled as far as Cusae in Middle Egypt and how the frontier at Elephantine was strongly held. Whether Kames himself ever made an expedition into Nubia is not known, but it is not unlikely. For his name occurs on a rock at Toski in Lower Nubia, with that of his successor Ahmes, the first king of the Eighteenth Dynasty, whom Griffith thinks he associated with himself as successor-designate.<sup>2</sup>

The first clear account of the military re-occupation of Nubia is the well-known inscription of Ahmes son of

<sup>1</sup> Gardiner, 1916 A, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> He also found a scarab at Faras with the name of Kames on it; see Griffith, 1921, p. 6.



Map 5. Upper Egypt and the Northern Sudan during the Egyptian New Kingdom



Ebana, which states that 'after His Majesty had destroyed the Asiatics, he went upstream to Hent hen nefer<sup>1</sup> to overthrow the Nubians'. How far south Ahmes operated effectively is not yet known. He must have occupied the whole of the navigable reach between the first two cataracts, for at Buhen the remains of the oldest temple, which is under the temple of Amenophis II, include a door-jamb from a temple of Ahmes and his queen, and it looks therefore as if Ahmes must have enlarged the fort at Buhen, for his temple is sited outside the Middle Kingdom fort and inside the New Kingdom fort, and it is doubtful whether by his reign Nubia could have been regarded as safe and peaceful enough for the temple to have been built outside the fort. He may even have advanced beyond the old Middle Kingdom frontier at Semna and built a fort on Sai Island (Pl. 23*b*), for a more or less life-size statue of him was found on the site of the fort there, which has not yet been excavated.<sup>2</sup>

Ahmes, son of Ebana, also accompanied Ahmes' successor Amenophis I 'when he ascended the river to Cush, in order to extend the frontier of Egypt<sup>3</sup>, and arrested a Nubian chief'. It was probably on this expedition that the inscription dated the eighth year of Amenophis I was written on the rocks near Uronarti fort.

It was Tuthmosis I (1530-1520 B.C.), the successor of Amenophis I, who completed the conquest of the northern Sudan. We have already mentioned (p. 66) the inscription on a rock at Tangūr in the Batn el Hagar, made in the second year of his reign, where a scribe 'counted the

<sup>1</sup> Hent hen nefer, a term now used for the first time, appears to be a vague one.

<sup>2</sup> The head of the statue is no. 3828 in Khartoum Antiquities Collection. In 1949 the lower part of the statue was still buried at Adu in Sai Island.

<sup>3</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, § 39.

ships<sup>2</sup>, no doubt anxiously, to see whether they had all safely survived the difficult passage through the rocks there. About five months later was made the great inscription on the granite boulder at Tumbus near the Third Cataract, when having travelled over 150 miles as the crow flies and much more round the bends of the river, and having successfully passed the many rocks and shoals, Tuthmosis came out on to the navigable and fertile Dongola Reach, probably the original land of Cush with its capital at Kerma. There was nothing immediately ahead to hinder his successful advance, for the local inhabitants could not effectively oppose his well-trained troops who had already conquered the far better armed

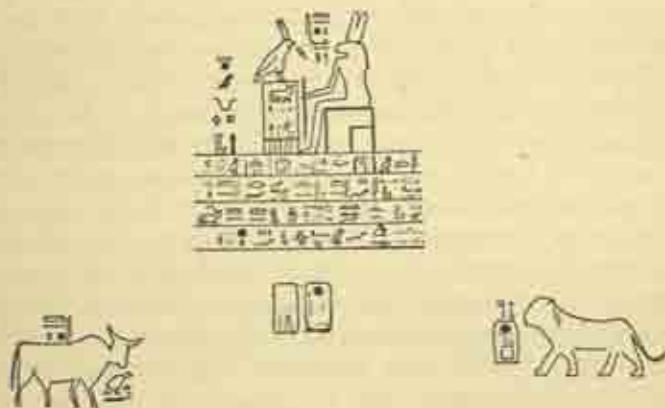


Fig. 10. Boundary inscription of Tuthmosis I at Kurgus

Hyksos, or the force of boats on which they were transported. The geographical situation of Tumbus is such that one can feel sure that, having there come out on to an easily navigable stretch of the river, it would have only been a matter of days before the force would have sailed on to modern Kareima (ancient Karei or Napata) below

the Fourth Cataract at the other end of it. And recently evidence has come to light that not only did Tuthmosis I reach the Fourth Cataract, but that he passed right beyond it, through another stretch of the river difficult to navigate, and set up a boundary inscription (which has not yet been fully deciphered)<sup>1</sup> between representations of himself as a lion and the god Amen as a bull (see Fig. 10) on a large quartz rock at Kurgus about 50 miles south of Abu Hamed, where the overland road from Korosko or Kubban in Lower Nubia rejoined the Nile again. The eroded foundations of a mud-brick fort on the river bank beside this inscription are all that is left of a fort more likely to have been built by this king than by any other.

In his inscription at Tumbus the construction of a fort is recorded—presumably at Tumbus—and then very justifiably his majesty boasts that he had 'penetrated valleys which the royal ancestors knew not, which the wearers of the double diadem had not seen . . . his name had penetrated the whole earth'. There are the remains of a mud-brick fort on the island at Tumbus which have not yet been published, and which are probably those of this fort of Tuthmosis I. If so, it must have been maintained subsequently as an administrative centre in connection with the quarrying of the grey Tumbus granite, which was to be in demand for royal statues for another 1500 years. Other sites at which forts were probably built by Tuthmosis I are Sai Island (if one had not already been built there by his predecessor Ahmes, see above) and the neighbourhood of the Fourth Cataract.

The Kurgus inscription makes it clear that the whole of the Dongola Reach was effectively occupied by Tuthmosis I. This conquest of the heart of Cush was a great extension of the Egyptian empire into Africa. Great military obstacles had been overcome, and the

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1950 A, pp. 36 ff.



natural defences of the people of Cush broken. It was an event of the greatest political significance in the northern Sudan, for as we have seen in the last chapter an important native chieftain lived at Kerma throughout the Second Intermediate Period. The successor of this chief must have been the most serious opponent of Tuthmosis I: and it may well have been he who was hung head downwards from the prow of his majesty's ship and carried back to Thebes, as Ahmes, son of Ebana, recorded. The conquest of Cush must have been a fatal blow to the independence of Upper Nubia.

How far south the military expeditions of Tuthmosis I and the other more active kings of the Eighteenth Dynasty penetrated is not yet known. The phrase 'Horns of the Earth' for the southern boundary of the Egyptian empire, as opposed to 'the Marshes of Asia' (the swamps of the Euphrates) as the northern boundary in the biography of Ineni in the Karnak hall<sup>1</sup> is repeated in an inscription of Tuthmosis II at Aswan, and suggests conspicuous hills which are not noticeable at Kurgus. Having reached Kurgus, there were no physical obstacles to pushing the frontier further south still. Meroë, which was the capital of the Meroitic kingdom (descendants of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty) from 500 B.C. to A.D. 350 and has not yet been fully excavated,<sup>2</sup> may well have been in origin an Eighteenth Dynasty Egyptian post, all traces of which have so far been hidden or destroyed by centuries of subsequent occupation and by the effect of rain and wind on the soft local sandstone and softer mud-brick. Part of a marriage scarab of Amenophis III and a few other objects from the same period were found at Meroë in a chamber of the palace built long after that date, but

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, § 101.

<sup>2</sup> Nor have Professor J. Garstang's excavations made there from 1909 to 1914 yet been fully published.



Sayce thought that these New Kingdom objects had probably been found on the spot.<sup>1</sup> While they *prove* nothing, they indicate that it will be well worth searching the Nile valley between Kurgus and the Sixth Cataract for traces of Eighteenth Dynasty activity, and nowhere are such traces more likely to be found than at Meroë and in the vicinity of the junction of the River Atbara with the Nile.

It was probably only south of the Fifth or Sixth Cataract that true negroes were living at the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty, if we are to judge from what is known of their distribution in prehistoric times. The inhabitants of the Dongola Reach were not negroes in Dynastic times any more than they are to-day, and there is no evidence that negroes were living north of the Sixth Cataract at that time. But it is certain that the conquest of the country as far as Kurgus at the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty did bring the Egyptians within reach of the real Sudan, the land of the blacks, and that this accounts for the more frequent representations of negroes in the art of the New Kingdom.

*The Northern Sudan develops peacefully as a Part of  
Egypt during the Eighteenth Dynasty*

There appears to have been—not unexpectedly—a revolt in Nubia after the death of Tuthmosis I, for there is an inscription on the rocks between Aswan and Philae dating from the first year of the reign of Tuthmosis II,<sup>2</sup> which records how a messenger arrived to inform his majesty that Cush had begun to rebel and the cattle of the Egyptians had had to be brought in behind the forts that his father Tuthmosis I had built to restrain the Nubians of Hent hen nefer; and how the chief of Cush and the chiefs

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, 1912, pp. 54-5.

<sup>2</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, §§ 119-22.

to the north of him had conspired together, and how a military expedition had been despatched and the rebels defeated. Not only was this revolt speedily crushed but also another revolt of a similar nature, probably made by the C Group people of Lower Nubia. These revolts must have been inspired by the news of the death of the great conqueror, and their failure must have taught the people of Nubia that the power of Egypt was something more than the personal power of one Pharaoh; and the realization of this must have largely accounted for the peace that prevailed in Nubia during the reign of Queen Hatshepsut and long afterwards.

The most noteworthy monument of her reign in Nubia is the fine temple at Buhen opposite Wadi Halfa.<sup>1</sup> In this temple her name wherever it occurred was removed by her husband and successor Tuthmosis III, who also spoiled the original symmetry of the building by clumsy alterations probably caused by the introduction of his great triumphal stela. She also built a temple to Hat-hor at Faras, of which the last remains were excavated by Griffith.<sup>2</sup> The greatest monument that she left to posterity, her lovely funerary temple at Deir el Bahri opposite Luxor, is inevitably associated with the south by its account of her successful expedition to the land of Punt, to which her ships seem to have gone by sea from Thebes and through some forerunner of the Suez canal down the Red Sea. The exact situation of Punt is still subject to argument, but it probably included the Somali coast, and indeed recent discoveries in Kenya make it appear possible that Egyptian expeditions to Punt were also made overland up the Nile valley at this period.

It is very doubtful whether there were any real wars between the Egyptians and the tribes of the northern

<sup>1</sup> Randall-MacIver and Woolley, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, 1921, pp. 83 ff.

Sudan after Tuthmosis II. In the Annals of Tuthmosis III inscribed on the walls of the corridor surrounding the granite holy of holies in the great temple of Amen at Karnak, are recorded the various military expeditions of this king to Asia and also the payment of the tribute of Wawat in years 31 and 33, and of Wawat and Cush in years 34, 35, 38, 39, 41 and 42. It is clear therefore that the tribute of Nubia was flowing fairly regularly into the Pharaoh's coffers before the solitary Nubian expedition which is recorded in the 50th year of his reign. In his second year he had rebuilt in sandstone in the fort at Semna West the mud-brick sanctuary of Senusret III, whom he added to the divinities Khnum and Dedun to whom the first temple had been dedicated, thereby making a trinity; and he built similar small temples in the forts at Semna East (Pl. 40) and Uronarti. His first victorious campaign in Asia in the twenty-third year of his reign was recorded in the temple built by Hatshepsut at Buhen; and the name of Nehi the viceroy, who set up this great stela, occurs at Semna in connection with the building of the temple there, and also in an inscription on Sai Island where a temple was probably also built by Tuthmosis III. This king also built a temple at Faras, and as late as the forty-seventh year of his reign, a stela was set up at Barkal which was found by Reisner and states that his southern boundary reached the 'Horns of the Earth', including therein obviously the Fourth Cataract region. It was not until the fiftieth year of his reign, when the old king had brought his many campaigns in Asia to a victorious conclusion that we hear of his expedition to Nubia. Breasted thinks that he was probably by then too old to have accompanied the expedition in person; but in the tomb of the vizier Rekhmare at Thebes it is said of Tuthmosis III that he



'knew that which occurred; there was nothing that he did not know; he was Thoth [the god of learning] in everything, there was no affair that he did not complete'; and it seems reasonable to look on his expedition to Nubia as a tour to the end of his dominions in the south, giving him first-hand knowledge of all his empire, as well as rounding off his conquests in Asia. If the king himself had not gone on this expedition, would they have troubled to duplicate the inscriptions of Tuthmosis I, using identical language not only in the record of the clearance of the canal through the First Cataract at Aswan, but also in the boundary inscription at Kurgus far beyond the Fourth Cataract?<sup>1</sup> Adding to the latter, which was cut on a quartz boulder, must have been, owing to the hardness of the stone, a most laborious operation.

Three lists of southern places and tribes that were subject to him were inscribed by Tuthmosis III on his pylons at Karnak, and they contain respectively 17, 115 and 400 names; but more study will have to be given to the problem than has been given so far, before it will be possible to locate more than one or two names, or indeed to say whether they are accurate records or mere inaccurate boasting.

After Tuthmosis III and well into the Nineteenth Dynasty expeditions to Nubia are frequently mentioned in inscriptions and represented on the walls of temples and tombs, but there is reason to think that if they recorded actual expeditions—and not all of them did—these were probably not for the suppression of rebels in the Nile Valley so much as punitive expeditions against nomads from the semi-desert hinterland, who had to be prevented from raiding the egyptianized inhabitants of the Nile Valley, and no doubt they also included slave raids beyond the area administered by Egypt.

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, §§ 649-50, and Arkell, 1950 A, p. 36.



Amenophis II (1450-1425 B.C.) records no Nubian expedition but merely the sending of a captive Asiatic prince to be hung on the walls of Napata; and an official called Min-hotep recorded at Tura (near Cairo) how he had erected a boundary stela at Karei (Fourth Cataract region) as well as one in Nahrein (Iraq).

From the reign of Tuthmosis IV (1425-1405 B.C.) there is a record at Konosso near Philae of one successful expedition perhaps into the eastern desert against some tribe that had raided Wawat (probably the Wadi Halfa district); and in his tomb the royal sphinx treads underfoot three Nubians and six foreigners (some of whom are represented as negroes) with the names Cush, Karei, Medju (Beja), Irm, Gwrss and Trk.<sup>1</sup> The last three names suggest the country west of the Nile now known as Darfur, where a section of the once royal tribe of Mina is still called Armi, another tribe in south-western Darfur is known as Kreish, and the Turuj are the serfs of another royal tribe, the Daju. The costume of all of them is typical of the south, spotted aprons, sash over one shoulder, large ear-rings and arm-rings; and the subordinate position of the scene indicates the greater importance of the Asiatic expeditions of this king, and implies the peaceful condition of the northern Sudan.

The reign of Amenophis III (1405-1370 B.C.) is generally noted for the peace that prevailed throughout the Egyptian empire; but from the fifth and sixth years of his reign come records of an expedition as far as Karei and apparently beyond, necessitated by a revolt in Cush. An inscription on a rock between Aswan and Philae and another on the island of Konosso near Philae record his victory, the latter naming Cush, Irm, Trk and Wrsh as conquered<sup>2</sup> (all apparently mentioned in the tomb

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, §§ 823-9; Carter and Newberry, 1904, pp. 31 ff., and Sève-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, §§ 843-5.

of Tuthmosis IV). A granite fragment, perhaps part of a large historical inscription, from the temple at Bubastis in the Delta<sup>1</sup> apparently refers to the same expedition, mentioning a battle and a subsequent move to the 'height of Hua' behind western Kha-sekhet, which was reached with a favourable wind. Neither of these place names have been identified, although they occur together in the Karnak list of southern places erected by Tuthmosis III; and it seems probable that they were upstream of the mouth of the Atbara, the name of Hua possibly surviving in that of the Hawawit of the Sixth Cataract.<sup>2</sup>

It was Amenophis III who erected at Sulb the finest temple<sup>3</sup> in Nubia (Pl. 5). It has rightly been compared with the temple of Luxor, and it has been suggested that the same architect may have designed them both, although the Luxor temple is built of limestone and has had many subsequent additions, while the Sulb temple was built of sandstone and completed by Amenophis III. Although sadly ruined, because it has frequently in the past been used as a quarry for building stone, the Sulb temple is still an impressive witness to the power and achievement of the Egyptians, working so far from their base. Many artistic masterpieces once adorned this temple. There were granite rams in the avenue of approach and two lions, the latter now in the British Museum (see Pl. 6a).<sup>4</sup> Both the rams and the lions were removed from Sulb to Barkal by kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty or their successors. One fine ram was taken from Barkal to Berlin by Lepsius, and there are other less perfect examples at Barkal now. The Berlin ram records how

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, ii, § 846.

<sup>2</sup> Crawford, 1951, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Not yet fully published. For representations see Caillaud, 1823, ii, pl. ix-xiv, and Lepsius 1849-59, iii, plates 83-8.

<sup>4</sup> Edwards, 1939, pl. i.

Amenophis III made it as a 'monument for his image Neb Maat Re', lord of Nubia, great god, lord of Heaven, making for him an excellent fortress surrounded by a great wall', and the temple is said to be visible on both sides of the river, as indeed it still is to-day; and very impressive it is. On another ram the temple is said to be in the fortress Kha m maat, 'Shining in Truth', thus giving the ancient name of Sulb. We see here Amenophis III staging a further development of the worship of the king, which was begun by Tuthmosis III when he instituted the cult of the dead conqueror Senusret III at Semna and Uronarti (see p. 64 and Pl. 4a), in originating at Sulb the cult of his own divine form on earth (Pl. 4b), and at Sadenga nearby the cult of his divine consort Queen Tiya<sup>1</sup>. Only one column still stands of the temple at Sadenga.

Peace continued during the reign of the next king Amenophis IV or Akhenaten (1370-1352 B.C.), and with it the building of temples in Nubia. At Sesibi<sup>2</sup> upstream of Sulb (near Delgo) were erected three contiguous temples on a common massive substructure. The foundation deposits from the substructure show that it was erected by Amenophis IV before he changed his name to Akhenaten, which he did in the sixth year of his reign. The buttressed walls of mud-brick enclose an area of 270 by 200 metres, occupied, in addition to the temples described above and a small Aten shrine, by a block of temple store-rooms and a town in which the houses are small and crowded. In each of the town walls was a well-constructed gateway, paved and faced with stone, with a drain beneath the paving for carrying off the rain-water, suggesting that the rainfall may have been greater then

<sup>1</sup> See also pp. 104 ff. for more about the gods worshipped in Nubia at this period.

<sup>2</sup> Fairman, 1938.



than it is to-day, when such a drain would only very occasionally be needed. The general aspect of the town wall suggests that it was probably built because it was traditional to build a wall round a town rather than that it was seriously intended for defence. The situation and wall are very different from those of the Middle Kingdom forts described in the last chapter. Sulb, which as we have seen was called a fort, but is not strategically situated, and of the walls of which not a trace is apparent to-day, seems to have been similar to Sesibi. Akhenaten (or his father Amenophis III) must also have founded the town of Gem-aten at Kawa opposite modern Dongola on the Dongola Reach a few miles upstream of Kerma, although the Oxford Excavations in Nubia found no building earlier than a small temple built by his successor Tutankhamen,<sup>1</sup> which had been usurped by Rameses II, not quite all the names of the founder having been replaced by those of Rameses II. At Faras too Huy, viceroy of Nubia under Tutankhamen, built a considerable temple and walled settlement, fronting the river, in a situation similar to that of Sesibi.<sup>2</sup> He named the place *Sehtep enter*, 'the Conciliation of the Gods', commemorating the king's reconciliation with the priests of Amen. The temple is entirely ruined, much of the masonry from it having been re-used in the Meroitic cemetery on the site, in excavating which Griffith discovered evidence of the previous existence of the temple.

The tomb of this viceroy Huy at Thebes<sup>3</sup> mentions no military operations in Nubia, but only the peaceful payment of tribute; and the well-known chest from the tomb of Tutankhamen, on which the king is represented in his chariot attacking a routed mass of negroes, is to be

<sup>1</sup> Macadam, 1949, p. xii.

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, 1921, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> Davies and Gardiner, 1926.



taken as a flight of fancy on the part of the craftsman intended to flatter the young king, rather than as serious historical evidence for actual operations on the part of the general Horemheb, who did make a tour of Nubia, probably intended to check up on the loyalty of officials after the restoration of the old regime, for Nubia as the source of gold and good soldiers was becoming of increasing importance in the home politics of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as Horemheb became king he went to Cush again; but this was probably a demonstration by one who had no real claim to the throne, and who wished to make sure of his position, although there is a representation of him in his rock temple at Silsila, returning with prisoners from Cush.

#### *Nubia under the Nineteenth Dynasty*

As far as Amara West has been excavated,<sup>2</sup> it appears that the town wall was built by the second king of this Dynasty, Seti I (1318-1298 B.C.) and the temple begun by Rameses II (1298-1232 B.C.). Alterations were made frequently throughout both the Nineteenth and the Twentieth Dynasties, indicating continuous occupation of this place, which is thought to have been the residence of the deputy of Cush, and if so was probably the chief administrative centre in Nubia at this time. It is certainly the most complete site from this period surviving in Upper Nubia, but Barkal, where were the great temple of Amen<sup>3</sup> (Pl. 10a) and other temples, was a much more important religious centre than Amara. Reisner concluded from the foundation deposits that this great temple was probably built by Horemheb or Seti I, while

<sup>1</sup> Sâve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> Fairman, 1938, 1939 and 1948. Shinnie, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Reisner, 1917.

its southern chapel was built by Rameses II. We shall see in the next chapter that it was from Barkal (Napata) that arose the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.

Representations of Nubian wars are frequent during Dynasties XIX and XX, but they give no dates or place names, and are not to be taken as historical documents any more than the chest of Tutankhamen. They were merely artistic attempts to balance in the style that had become classic the representations of Asiatic campaigns. Rameses I (1320-1318 B.C.) in his second year erected a stela at Buhen,<sup>1</sup> on which he records how he filled the temple with slaves that he had captured. The stela does not say where they were captured, while at least one Nineteenth Dynasty inscription talks of sending Asiatic prisoners to Cush and *vice versa*, and Breasted<sup>2</sup> deduced from it—?erroneously—that there had probably been a war waged in Nubia by the king's son, Seti I. Seti does record on a stela found at Amara West a campaign against the Nubian land of Irm, which was mentioned in the tomb of Tuthmosis IV and in an inscription of Amenophis III on Konosso Island, but it cannot have been a war of any importance, for it is not mentioned among Seti's wars at Karnak, where all the wars recorded are against Asiatics and Libyans, and only two scenes in which he slays southerners are plagiarized copies of earlier reliefs.

The many representations of the Nubian wars of Rameses II are equally unreal, and in some cases are confused with events that took place in the north, and which they were apparently invented to balance in artistic compositions. Such scenes occur in the three Lower Nubian temples of Beit el Wali, Derr and Abu Simbel (Pl. 7b). At Beit el Wali and Derr the king is shown in his chariot attacking Nubians. On the left is a Nubian

<sup>1</sup> Now in the Louvre at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> Breasted, 1906, iii, §§ 74-5.

village under palm trees, where a woman is lamenting in front of her hut; near her is a shepherd with his flocks; and a wounded man is being brought in from battle. The scene seems to have been copied from the earlier one of Horemheb at Silsila. Indeed there is much that seems to be conventional and senseless<sup>1</sup> about these representations, for Nubia was by now an important province of Egypt, long part of her empire, and ruled by the king's officers, while the native chiefs can only have played unimportant parts, having no power to resist Egypt. To take literally such phrases as 'the king, the bull mighty against miserable Cush, who roars against Nubia and treads the Nubians under his hoof and gores them with his horns, while his might seizes Hent hen nefer and his terror reaches Karei' is to obtain a very wrong idea of Egypt's southern policy. It is true that after Rameses II such inscriptions become less frequent. The last representation of a Nubian war is that of Rameses III (1198-1166 B.C.) at Medinat Habu, which is a copy of the scenes of Rameses II at Derr and Beit el Wali, with only minor alterations. The list of southern peoples conquered, which occurs with it, is also taken from earlier lists. In Nubia there remain some representations of conquered southern peoples, on the small pieces of the temple of Rameses II that still survive at Aksha on the west bank between Buhen and Faras (Pl. 86); and a fuller list with nearly a hundred names was found in the temple of Amara West, but it appears probable that it is a copy of the earlier list of Amenophis III in the great temple at Sulb. Nubia as far as the Fourth Cataract had indeed in actual fact by the Nineteenth Dynasty, if not before, become part of Egypt and had lost its own identity; and

<sup>1</sup> Sæve-Söderbergh, 1941, pp. 171-2.



under Rameses XI (c. 1085 B.C.) we shall find the viceroy of Cush interfering with his Nubian troops in the internal politics of Egypt.

*The Viceroys of Cush and the Administration of Nubia  
under the New Kingdom*

The viceroy, 'King's Son in Cush,' was responsible for the administration of the southern half of the country, from Nekhen (Hierakonpolis) to Karei (Napata), as is



Fig. 11. Representations of some viceroys of Cush

clearly stated in the tomb of Huy, viceroy under Tutankhamen. If we are right in identifying Karei with the modern Kareima just below the Fourth Cataract, this suggests that any earlier commitments upstream of the Fourth Cataract had been liquidated by then; or, alternatively, Karei may have included the country as far as Kurgus.

The names of viceroys frequently occur in inscriptions. The following is a list of them<sup>1</sup>:

Thuwre	under Amenophis I and Tuthmosis I
Seni	under Tuthmosis I and II
Nehi	under Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1920. For another list see Gauthier, 1923. See also Sève-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 175.



Wesersatet	under Amenophis II
Amenophis	under ? Tuthmosis IV and Amenophis III
Mermose	under Amenophis III
Tuthmosis	under Amenophis IV Akhenaten
Huy-Amenophis	under Tutankhamen
Paser I	under Aye and Horemheb ?
Amenemopet, son of Paser I	under Seti I and Rameses II
Yuni	under Seti and Rameses II
Hekanakht	under Rameses II
Paser II son of Minmose	under Rameses II
Sethauw	under Rameses II
Messuwy	under Merneptah, Amenmesses ? and Seti II
Seti	under Siptah
Hori I	under Siptah, Setnakht ? and Rameses III ?
Hori II son of Hori I	under Rameses III ?, Rameses IV and Rameses V ?
Wentawuat	under ? Rameses VI-VIII
Ramessenakht	under ? Rameses IX
Pa-nehesi	under Rameses XI
Herihor	under Rameses XI
Piankhy	under Herihor

The viceroy was responsible for the punctual payment of the tribute of Nubia (both from Wawat and Cush) see Pl. 8a. He was usually chosen from the royal entourage, to ensure his fidelity, and he was directly responsible to the king. He seems to have brought the tribute personally and to have handed it over with ceremony to the vizier or treasurer. In the graves of the viziers or treasurers scenes similar to those in the tombs of the viceroys were represented, but with the viceroy eliminated (see Fig. 12).

The staff of the viceroy included a commander of the bowmen of Cush, and two deputies, one for Wawat and



Fig. 12. The tribute of Nubia, from the tomb of the vizier Rekhmire

the other for Cush; and we have seen that it is thought that during the Nineteenth Dynasty the Deputy of Cush resided at Amara West. Most of the viceroy's officials were no doubt Egyptians, but they included some egyptianized Nubians, for at Buhen an official calls himself the son of the chief of Tchekti, which was the old name for Serra<sup>1</sup>. No doubt loyal native chiefs were left in charge of their tribal areas, and chiefs of Ma'am (modern Aniba) and Wawat are depicted leading their people to bring tribute to Tutankhamen. Such chiefs were no doubt held responsible for the tribute of their people, although attempts at independence such as some chiefs made early in the Eighteenth Dynasty were naturally crushed with severity.

The children of Nubian chiefs were taken to Egypt, originally as hostages, but they were given both Egyptian education and rank; thus a chief of Ma'am in a rock inscription at Toski calls himself sandal-bearer and page of the king. Pages were children who were brought up with the young princes, and they kept the title in later life. There is no doubt that Egyptian policy towards Nubia aimed at a peaceful symbiosis of Egyptians and natives. There was no question of exterminating even the families of chiefs, although this would not have been difficult to do.

*The Nature of Egyptian Settlement in Nubia  
during the New Kingdom*

How far Nubia was colonized by Egyptians during the New Kingdom is difficult to estimate. The reorganization of the land on Egyptian lines after its reconquest,

<sup>1</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 184; Moss, 1950.

and the introduction of a fully Egyptian form of administration, must have led naturally to some Egyptian colonization. At the outset administrators and occupation troops must have been Egyptians. It must not however be thought that the whole country was so fully colonized by Egyptian settlers that the local population was exterminated. No doubt Egyptian colonies consisting of soldiers, officials and priests increased at centres of administration, as is clear for example from the excavations at Aniba, but the villages no doubt remained entirely native. Egyptianized Nubians were of course buried in Egyptian fashion at centres such as Aniba and Buhen, but because fully egyptianized their graves are difficult to distinguish from those of Egyptians. Indeed the egyptianization which had developed to some extent in Lower Nubia during the Second Intermediate Period no doubt advanced still further, both in degree in Lower Nubia and in geographical extent in Upper Nubia. On the other hand, to the Egyptian, as still to-day, Nubia was a foreign land, and to the end whenever possible important Egyptian officials must have been taken back to Egypt for burial. This attitude alone is enough to make it certain that only such Egyptians as were essential to its administration settled in Nubia during the New Kingdom.

When Nubia was reconquered, the Middle Kingdom forts were reoccupied and brought into use, but as the country became more settled their importance as strong points decreased, and markets and administrative centres became the most important places. Thus Bigeh, Elephantine and Ikkur decreased in importance. Kubban functioned for Ikkur as well, the fort being used as a treasury, round which grew up an open town, and a temple was built in it by Rameses X. At Aniba too, although the



fort was rebuilt, a town was allowed to grow up all round it. At Faras, where we know from the tomb of Huy that there was a fort in the time of Tutankhamen, temples were built by Tuthmosis III and Rameses II in what was probably the main Middle Kingdom fort; and the temple of Tutankhamen, though surrounded by a wall, was in no strong strategic position, while as early as the reign of Queen Hatshepsut the temple of Hat-hor had been built outside any fortified area. Graves and inscriptions show that Serra East was occupied during the New Kingdom. Buhen flourished, the Middle Kingdom fort being considerably enlarged, and the depot at Iken, south of Buhen, was also apparently still a busy place, as was natural, since its geographical situation is such that it must have been an important base for supplies brought from Egypt for the country upstream of the Second Cataract, and also perhaps for the assembling of the tribute of Cush before its despatch to Egypt.

The Second Cataract forts on the other hand lost their importance. Shelfak and Mirgissa were not used at all. In some forts, as at Uronarti and two at Semna, small temples were built, but probably only one of the Semna forts was used as a military post, and it was not enlarged. With the occupation of Cush by Tuthmosis I some new forts were built, both for defensive reasons and also to provide bases for operations against truculent nomad tribes. Whatever the reason, most of the new forts were built on the west bank of the river (Sai, Amara, Sulb, Sadenga and Sesibi). In the tomb of Huy the mayor of Sulb (*hâty n Kha-m-maat*) is placed near the deputies of Wawat and Cush, showing the importance of Sulb at that time. The fort at Amara seems to have been built by Seti I. The Nauri decree mentions a 'fort of Seti Merneptah which is in Sekhem' which is not otherwise known and appears to have been in the vicinity, the fort at

Amara being probably too far away for this to be a reference to it. We have seen that Tuthmosis I probably built forts at Tumbus and Kurgus. There *may* have been a fort at Kawa, where the town site has not yet been excavated, but this is doubtful; and at the Fourth Cataract the stela of Tuthmosis III found at Jebel Barkal mentions a fort called 'Death to foreigners' which was presumably in that vicinity, although it has not yet been located. In several places only the remains of the temples are known, for example at Sulb, Kawa and Napata, but it must have been necessary to protect temples and their stores from robbers by building strong walls round them; and this may be the reason for the city being walled at Sesibi and Amara long after walls had ceased to be needed to ward off hostile attacks.

In Lower Nubia a number of small temples date from the New Kingdom, many of them being rock temples, as at Beit el Wali, Gerf Hussein, Sebuia, Derr and Abu Simbel (two), of which the great temple of Rameses II at Abu Simbel with the four colossal figures of the king carved out of the side of the hill, in which the whole of the temple was hollowed out, is the most remarkable and best known (Pl. 7a). Yet so few New Kingdom graves were found in Lower Nubia by the Archaeological Survey of Nubia that it has been suggested<sup>1</sup> that it must have been practically uninhabited at that time, and that the temples had only been built to glorify the greatness and piety of the king, and were only used by people travelling from Egypt to Upper Nubia. The temples are however all situated at centres of population,<sup>2</sup> where there is cultivable land, and it is probable that Lower Nubia was more thickly inhabited than is indicated by chance-preserved graves. Many cemeteries have been

<sup>1</sup> Firth, 1927, pp. 25-8.

<sup>2</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 197.

badly robbed. In other places they are probably covered by drift sand, or are above the area flooded by the reservoir, and so were not found. A number of New Kingdom graves were excavated at Buhen, and there is an extensive (but robbed) cemetery at Iken which has not been excavated.

Temples must have played a considerable part in the economic life of the country, and the comparative richness of Upper Nubia in the New Kingdom is indicated by the remains of temples at Faras, Aksha, Buhen, Amara, Sai, Sulb, Sadenga, Sesibi, Kawa and Barkal, and by the decree of Seti I at Nauri just downstream of the Third Cataract, which suggests that the temple of Osiris at Abydos had large estates and interests in Cush, probably in the vicinity of Nauri. In the decree farming, fishing, bee-keeping, boat-building, water transport, trading and gold-washing are mentioned among other occupations of employees of the temple, and severe penalties prescribed for anyone from viceroy downwards who might interfere with temple staff or property.

*The Gods worshipped in Nubia during the  
New Kingdom*

Various gods were worshipped in the New Kingdom temples of Nubia. Khnum, the ram god who formed men on the potter's wheel, and the goddesses Satet and Anuket who were worshipped as a triad in the First Cataract area, were also worshipped at Faras, Buhen, and a small rock shrine at Dosha near Sulb. Khnum was also worshipped at Gerf Hussein, Derr, Abu Simbel and Sulb, but only at Semna East as chief god. At Abu Simbel Amen-Re' was the chief god, as he was at Thebes and Napata. Dedun, a Nubian god, first mentioned in the Pyramid Texts as Lord of Ta Zeti (the land of the



bow, see p. 40), and worshipped with the deified Senusret III at Semna in anthropomorphic form, was probably originally a hawk god, the prototype of the Horus gods, later differentiated as Horus of Baki, Horus of Ma'am and Horus of Buhen. At Abu Simbel and also at Faras Hat-hor of Ibshek, a form of the cow-headed sky-goddess, was worshipped.



Fig. 13. The god Horus of Buhen gives life to the king

While the worship of the king was introduced into Egypt as well as into Nubia, it was of greater importance in Nubia, where, as we have seen it began with Tuthmosis III ordering that Senusret III should be revered as the protective deity of Nubia (Pl. 4a). This may have been in effect a declaration of policy, a vow to maintain the occupation of Nubia, and a warning to the local inhabitants, which came to be forgotten later when there was no longer need for it.<sup>1</sup> In any case the

choice of Semna and Uronarti, where Senusret III had set up his well-known frontier inscriptions, as his chief cult places, is noticeable. His worship is known to have extended from Amada to Dosha. (A fragment from Serra East suggests that Tuthmosis III was himself worshipped as a god at Serra, as he was at Gurob in

<sup>1</sup> Säve-Söderbergh, 1941, p. 203.



Egypt probably in the Nineteenth Dynasty). Amenophis III, as we saw (p. 92) went further than Tuthmosis III and instituted at Sulb a cult of his own living form on earth, Neb Maat Re', (Pl. 4b) and of his queen Tiy at Sadenga close by. At Thebes also a temple was consecrated to his living form. He is described at Sulb as Lord of Ta Zeti in the fort Kha m maat, making it appear that he was not merely a local deity but the protective deity of all Nubia, and the proportions of the temple go far to confirm this. Fragments from Faras suggest that Tutankhamen may have been worshipped there. Rameses II certainly continued the practice. At Sebuā, Gerf Hussein, Abu Simbel and Aksha he is represented as worshipping his own statue, 'his living form on earth' or, as at Aksha, 'his living form in Nubia'. At Aksha he was the chief god, although at Sebuā, Gerf Hussein and Abu Simbel he is inferior to Amen, taking the place of the son (Khonsu) in the trinity of Amen, Mut and Khonsu.

*The chief Exports of Nubia under the  
New Kingdom*

As in the Middle Kingdom, the chief export from Nubia to Egypt was gold, and it appears from the Annals of Tuthmosis III that most of it came from Wawat, between the First and Second Cataracts, reaching the Nile at Kubban by the road from the Allāqi mines; but 'gold of the washings', 'gold of Karei' and 'gold of the mountains of Cush' are mentioned in inscriptions. In Hatshepsut's temple at Deir el Bahri chiefs of Irm and Nimiu are shown bringing gold to the queen from the south. The Nimiu have negroid features, and their name suggests that they may possibly have been the ancestors of the Nyima Nuba of southern Kordofan. The Irm we have already met (pp. 90 and 95); they may well have lived west of the

Nile in the steppe country now known as Kordofan, where (as in eastern Darfur) there are traces of an ancient people with a similar name *Armi*, now a section of the *Mima*. Gold was usually exported in rings, ingots and probably also as dust. The promise of Kerma does not seem to have been fulfilled, and it is very doubtful whether goldsmiths in Nubia produced during the New Kingdom any works of art that were valued in Egypt. It is not till the Amarna period that anything but raw materials are figured in representations of the tribute of the south, and then only from Wawat; and the only gold work then represented consists of the rims of two shields shown in the tomb of the viceroy Huy.

Other raw materials exported were wood, including ebony, gum, ivory, ostrich feathers and ostrich eggs, and perhaps copper, carnelian, haematite (red ochre) and amazon stone. Perfumes and oils were also exported and occasionally grain; also selected cattle, leopards and leopard-skins, giraffes and giraffe-tail fly-whisks, dogs and baboons. Slaves were also included in the tribute, numbers being given in the annals of Tuthmosis III, where more come from Cush than from Wawat, but they do not exceed a few hundreds. There is also a Ramessid letter of some interest with the express command to include slaves from the people of *Irm* and *Trk* in the tribute. The latter people sound like the *Turuj* (see p. 90), a name which still survives in Darfur for the slaves of the *Daju*, the earliest sultans of Darfur, whose descendants in *Dar Sila* still use some brands which seem to have their origin in hieroglyphs (see p. 176).

Boats were built in Nubia for the transport of the tribute, but whether they went further than the Second Cataract is not certain. The tribute was probably transhipped at *Iken* to larger boats for the journey on to Egypt.

*The End of the New Kingdom in Nubia*

Towards the end of the New Kingdom Nubia with its wealth and good soldiers became increasingly important in the struggles for power which went on in Egypt. We know that Merneptah-Siptah (c. 1200 B.C.) went to Nubia to install the viceroy Seti, and it was probably this viceroy who came to the throne as Seti II.

Under the Twentieth Dynasty the commander of the bowmen in Nubia took part in the harem conspiracy in the reign of Rameses III (1198-1166 B.C.) in support of his sister, who was one of the conspirators; but the viceroy of Cush remained true to the king, and for this reason perhaps nothing came of the conspiracy. Under the last king of the Twentieth Dynasty, Rameses XI, Egypt was riven by civil war. There was a rising in which foreigners, particularly Libyans, took part. The viceroy Pa-nehesi was in Upper Egypt at the time with a body of Nubian troops, probably brought to overawe the Libyans of Herakleopolis, who were becoming increasingly powerful. It was certainly Pa-nehesi who restored order in Thebes, and after the revolt Herihor became chief priest. He seems to have been not even a priest before, but to have been raised straight to the position of chief priest by Pa-nehesi and his Nubian troops. After this Pa-nehesi returned to Nubia, and was eventually succeeded as viceroy by Herihor, who as viceroy of Cush and vizier of Thebes became the actual ruler of Upper Egypt and Nubia. As chief priest he controlled the treasury of Amen, and as viceroy he was assured of the support of the Nubian troops; and he kept the post of viceroy until he became king (1085 B.C.), when he made his own son Piankhy viceroy. In all this the important part played by the Nubian troops should be noted.

After this the administration of Egypt became more and more corrupt, and art more and more degenerate, and in Nubia a dark age is entered. The origin of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (see next chapter) is wrapped in obscurity. But if Piankhy, the first great king of that dynasty which originated from Napata, conquered a politically and culturally degenerate Egypt, giving himself out to be a champion of true Egyptian beliefs and customs, he was in the true line of succession to the last Ramessids, under whom an egyptianized Nubia became one of the chief factors in the internal politics of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

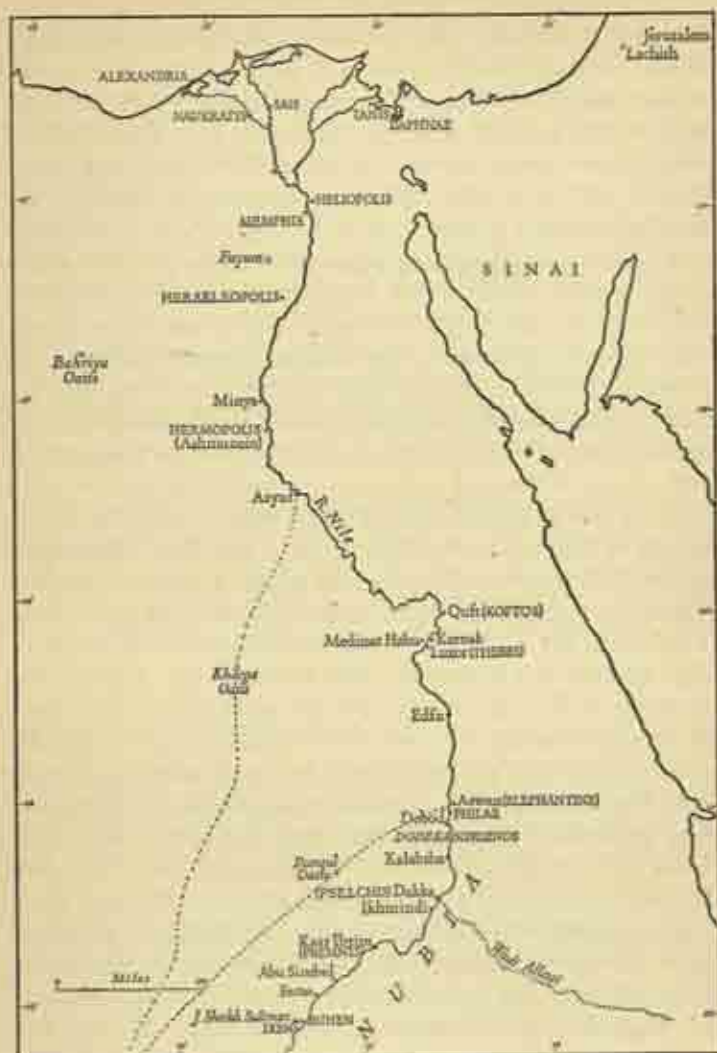
<sup>1</sup> Drioton and Vandier, 1938, p. 513.



## Cush conquers Egypt (c. 725-660 B.C.)

NAPATA, which lay at the far end of the Dongola Reach just downstream of the Fourth Cataract in the district known in the Eighteenth Dynasty as Karei, was an area rather than a single town, and embraced the country on both sides of the river from modern Kurru to Nuri, including also Merowe, Barkal and Karcima.

Upstream of the Fourth Cataract, which begins near Nuri, not only is navigation difficult but even travelling by land beside the river is no easy matter owing to alternating rocks and sand drifts; and it is clear that at this time communication between the southern sub-capital of Meroë (near Kabushiya in Shendi District) and Napata was usually maintained not by river but by a road which cut across the great bend of the river and ran via Jakdul and other wells. Immediately downstream of the Fourth Cataract there is a remarkable change in the nature of the country, the Nile coming out of the older hard rocks into an area of Nubian Sandstone and so forming the navigable Dongola Reach with flat cultivable alluvial land on either side of the river as far as Tumbus beyond Kerma, where the granite rocks of the Third Cataract again impede navigation. At Kurru at the downstream end of Napata, as we shall shortly see, the kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty and five generations of their ancestors were buried, although the only pyramid that still survives there is one of a later king. Just opposite Kurru on the left bank is the still important market of Tangäsi, to which come goods and animals for sale from as far south as Khartoum. Five miles upstream of Tangäsi across an alluvial plain lies modern Merowe, the headquarters of the District Commissioner. Near Merowe



Map 6. The Lower Nile Valley, 725 B.C.-A.D. 350

hospital is the site of a cemetery of this period, and a short distance further upstream lie the ruins of a sandstone temple of Taharqa.<sup>1</sup> Immediately upstream and east of this temple is a very extensive but much eroded ancient site, indicated by low mounds covered with many sherds, where Griffith did some excavation, bringing to light the eroded foundations of the walls of a huge block of store-rooms, in which fragments of the semi-precious blue-green amazon stone, ivory, iron ingots, etc., showed where the kings of Cush kept their stores of raw materials, probably down to the time of the sack of Napata by Petronius in 23 A.C. This building Griffith called the Treasury, and there is little doubt that thereabouts is the site of the palace of the kings of Napata, although it has not yet been definitely located. Several miles further upstream on the same bank is the pyramid field of Nuri. Approximately at the centre of Napata on the right bank, is the Holy Mountain, Jebel Barkal, from its peculiar shape looked on as the throne of Amen-Re<sup>2</sup>, 'Lord of the Winds'<sup>2</sup> (Pl. 9a). Here Tuthmosis III and IV had built temples, and at the base of this hill on the riverward side early in the Nineteenth Dynasty had been constructed the great temple of Amen, to which Rameses II had made additions (p. 95). This great temple (Pl. 10a) was cased in a wall of red sandstone and the columns of its forecourt rebuilt by Piankhy, the first great king of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty; and many were the temples added here by his successors. At Jebel Barkal a colony of Egyptian priests of Amen-Re<sup>2</sup> had been resident by this time for some centuries, and their numbers were in all probability swollen considerably by exiles from Thebes, who took refuge at this southern counterpart of Karnak (as a centre of the worship of Amen),

<sup>1</sup> Both excavated, see Griffith, 1922 and 1923.

<sup>2</sup> So named on a scarab from Dongola seen in possession of a merchant at Omdurman.

when the Twenty-second (Libyan) Dynasty came into power in Egypt c. 950 B.C. At the end of the last chapter we noticed these Libyans of Herakleopolis in conflict with the high-priests of Thebes (the latter supported by the viceroy and troops from Nubia) in the struggle for the throne of Egypt. By the end of the Twenty-second Dynasty Cush (Nubia) had probably become actually if not nominally independent of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> But in addition to the priests of Amen at Jebel Barkal there were also no doubt a considerable number of Egyptians still resident between the Second and Fourth Cataracts, for this part of the modern Northern Province (Merowe-Dongola and Wadi Halfa Districts) had been looked on as part of Upper Egypt since the conquest of Tuthmosis I c. 1525 B.C. (see p. 82 ff.).

The kingdom, whose conquest of Egypt is such a landmark in the history of the Sudan, was known to the Asiatics at that time as the Kingdom of Cush and Misr, and the Kingdom of Cush is the best name to use for it now, as Dunham, Reisner's collaborator and successor, has already pointed out. The 'Ethiopian Kingdom', the name used for it by Reisner, to whose excavations at Kurru, Barkal, Nuri and Meroë, is due a great advance in our knowledge about these kings who gave Egypt its Twenty-fifth Dynasty, has already led to much confusion in the minds of Sudanese students, for Ethiopia is now the official modern name of Abyssinia. *Ethiops* = 'burnt face' was a name invented by the Greeks for the dark-complexioned inhabitants of southern lands, and it had originally no geographical significance. It is comparable to the modern 'nigger'. The king of Meroë was called 'king of the Ethiopians' in contemporary Greek in the third century A.D., and since his kingdom was later at least partly merged in the Axumite kingdom, the name

<sup>1</sup> Dunham, 1946.



'Ethiopia' is correctly continued in Abyssinia to-day. In this history the term 'Kingdom of Cush' will be used for the kingdom of Napata-Meroë in order to avoid any confusion.

The political and cultural degeneration in Egypt during the centuries preceding the eighth century B.C. and the consequent lack of written records, are responsible for the uncertainty about the origins of this remarkable dynasty. Reisner on insufficient evidence concluded that the kings of Cush had a Libyan ancestry.<sup>1</sup> Others have argued that they were of Theban origin, presumably having risen from the ranks of the priests of Amen at Barkal<sup>2</sup>; and they certainly did give themselves the regular Egyptian title 'King of Upper and Lower Egypt'.

<sup>1</sup> See Reisner, 1919 A, pp. 41-4. Before he excavated at Kurru Reisner thought that the kings of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty were descended from the Libyans of Herakleopolis who founded the Twenty-second Dynasty in Egypt. See also Reisner, 1919 B, especially p. 246, where he then decided that stone arrowheads (see Fig. 15) which he found in several of the ancestors' graves at Kurru were Libyan types, and apparently misread a word on the stela of Queen Tahiry, one of the queens of Piankhy, (now in the Khartoum Museum) as 'Temchu'—the southern Libyans, and thus thought she was 'great chieftainess of the Temchu'. On this slender evidence he concluded that 'while the northern Libyans were entering the Delta, or soon after, the southern Libyans, the Temchuw, pushed into the Nile Valley, coming no doubt over the old road of the oases. . . . During the reign of Shishang I or possibly a little later, a Libyan chief, the man buried in Kurruw tumulus I established himself on an estate at el Kurruw. . . . In all probability this first chief of the el Kurruw family seized at once on the powers of the old Egyptian viceroy and became like all the other Libyan chiefs in the Nile Valley nominally tributary to the Libyan king of Egypt. . . . The family seem to have obtained the domination of Ethiopia and to be pausing before the advance into Egypt'. But the evidence for all this is non-existent, and it does not fit such facts as are known to us.

<sup>2</sup> Drioton and Vandier, 1938, p. 513 consider that the fact that the first great king of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was Piankhy, which had been the name of the son and successor of Herihor (see p. 109), supports this theory.

But it seems equally probable that they were natives of Cush (Dongola), who had been egyptianized by close contact with the priests of Amen at Barkal. Indeed those priests may well have inspired them with the idea of conquering Egypt and so freeing them from the hated and despised Libyans, who had previously defeated the priestly dynasty of Herihor. No doubt other contributory factors that led to their conquest of Egypt were the lack of any strong power in that land and the ambition of the chieftains of Cush.

We have already noticed the absence of written records that might throw light on the history of the two centuries preceding the rise of the kingdom of Cush and we shall see that such records as cover the actual history of that kingdom (the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt) are few and far between. Under these circumstances the historian has to resort to archaeology for evidence, and it so happens that almost all the evidence that is available at present comes from the royal cemeteries. This is not surprising, for the royal tomb was constructed as the dead ruler's home for eternity, while the palace (his home for the few years of his life) was no doubt largely constructed of perishable materials such as wood and grass, this being the reason why it has not been located, and indeed has seldom ever been located in Egypt. The other main subjects for archaeological study from this period, the temples, especially those of Jebel Barkal,<sup>1</sup> although built of stone, usually only illuminate the past when stelae, which were set up in their precincts, survive to record historical occurrences. Almost all the rare written evidence for this period is of this nature.

At Kurru the main cemetery with the tombs of the first four kings is a sandstone plateau between two wadis,

<sup>1</sup> There are temples or other constructions from this period at Kawa, Semna West, Buhen and Meroë, as well.

beyond which on either side are the tombs of the queens of those kings. The best site was occupied by a small private grave of tumulus type, and the next fifteen places in point of desirability were filled with a succession of tombs of increasing size and excellence of construction; and then came the four royal tombs in the four worst sites in the cemetery, obviously the latest burials in a cemetery which had been in continuous use since about 860 B.C., it being now reckoned that the earliest thirteen graves cover five generations.<sup>1</sup> There is a gradual development in tomb form—first, the simple pit grave under a tumulus with the corpse buried on the right side with knees slightly bent, head north, face west; then an improved tumulus with a casing of sandstone masonry, a mud-brick chapel, and a horseshoe-shaped enclosing wall; then a roughly square masonry mastaba over a pit tomb with masonry chapel, the whole surrounded by a rectangular enclosing wall; and then a later type of mastaba under which the burial pits were orientated east-west, the orientation of all the later royal tombs. Next in point of time came the graves of six queens of Piankhy, in which the burial pits were roofed with corbel-vaults of masonry. The tomb of King Piankhy himself was situated in front of a row of mastabas, lower down the slope towards the river; and in it, in order that the vault could be built before the funeral, a small stairway was cut in the rock and opened into the eastern end of the pit through a rock-cut doorway. This was the first of a long series of royal stairway tombs. It is impossible to say, since the material has been robbed in antiquity, whether the superstructure was a mastaba or a pyramid, but it is generally assumed to have been a pyramid, as in the succeeding tombs. The square superstructure, whichever

<sup>1</sup> See Dunham, 1950, p. 2.



it was, was directly over the corbel-roofed burial pit, while the abutting chapel on the eastern side must have been built after the burial, on the debris which filled the stairway. The foundation of the chapel was thus a very weak feature and must have resulted in its speedy collapse.

The tomb of Shabako was placed about 20 yards north of that of Piankhy, on which it is a definite improvement. The burial chamber is no longer a pit chamber but a room of similar form hollowed in the solid rock, with a rock-cut roof of the form of the corbel-vault of Piankhy. The stairway, much better cut and deeper, descended as before to the door of the chamber. But the weakness caused by founding the chapel on the filling of the stairway was avoided by cutting the last six steps down through a sloping rock-cut tunnel, instead of leaving it open right up to the doorway of the chamber, the chapel being built over this tunnel and so on a sound rock foundation. The square superstructure, that here clearly had once been a pyramid, was built directly over the burial chamber.

The tomb of Shebitku shows further improvement in that the stairway stopped at the beginning of the tunnel, which was converted into a corridor with horizontal roof and flat floor. The burial chamber was larger, but was again roofed by a corbel vault.

Next in date was the pyramid of Taharqa, the largest at Nuri, for which there was no room at Kurru. Here the stairway and large rectangular burial chamber were as in the tomb of Shebitku, but the horizontal corridor-tunnel was converted into a small ante-room. This two-room plan was also followed in the tombs of two of the queens of Taharqa.



Tanwetamani, the last king of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty was buried at Kurru under a small pyramid between that of Shabako and the northern wadi.

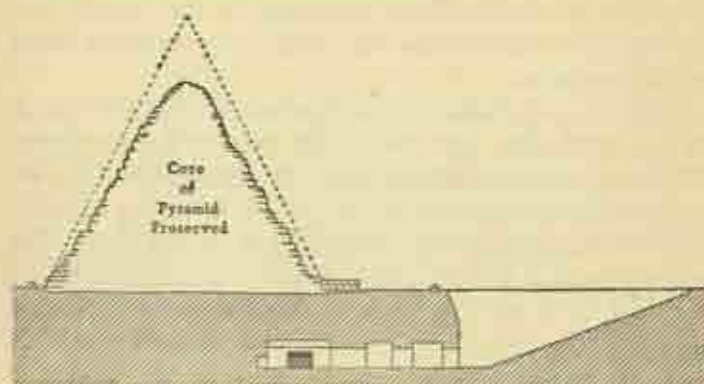


Fig. 14. The pyramid of Aspelta at Nuri, showing the sarcophagus in the burial chamber below (after Dunham)

(To complete the picture of the royal tombs of Cush we may note here that it was Tanwetamani's second successor Senkamanisken, a rich and powerful king, who built the next largest pyramid to that of Taharqa (about 28 metres square) and introduced a room between the ante-room and the burial chamber. Senkamanisken also built at least one temple at Jebel Barkal (see p. 94), and was the only king besides Taharqa to have stone *shabti* figures (see Fig. 19) made for himself.

Not a single name of any of the sixteen predecessors of Piankhy was recovered from the Kurru cemetery, although one of them was presumably Kashta, his father and immediate predecessor, who, as we shall see, began the conquest of Egypt. It does not appear that the tombs of the females were separated from those of the men before Piankhy.

Four of the earlier tumuli contained stone arrow-heads with recessed and tanged bases, the former of which

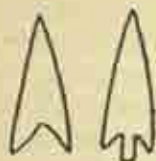


Fig. 15. Stone arrow-heads from graves at Kurru.

Scale 1:2

Reisner thought to be Libyan in type. They also contained much gold. In the earliest tumulus, which had been severely plundered, gold beads equal in weight to 38 English sovereigns had been neglected by the thieves. Fragments of fine alabaster vases and of faience vessels, both of Egyptian make, were found in most of the graves.<sup>1</sup>

The orientation of the early graves at Kurru was non-Egyptian and only altered in the later graves so as to conform to Egyptian practice. And while the furnishings and iconography of the royal tombs in most respects follow the standard Egyptian practice of the period, there is a notable difference.<sup>2</sup> The coffin bench is constructed with niches cut out near its corners for the legs of a funerary bed, the frame of which rested on the bench. In one of the queen's tombs two bronze bed-legs were found still in place<sup>3</sup>. In two of the cemeteries at Meroë private graves were also found with skeletons lying on their side in a natural sleeping position—not in a coffin—and resting on the remains of beds, the legs of which had been set in holes in the floor of the grave. This un-Egyptian form of burial is reminiscent of that practised at Kerma (at the other end of the Dongola Reach and at least a thousand years earlier, see p. 69); and the explanation must be that the inhabitants of Cush (including Meroë) despite a high degree of egyptianization

<sup>1</sup> The above information on the tomb development is taken from Reisner, 1919 n. See also Dunham, 1950.

<sup>2</sup> See Dunham, 1946.

<sup>3</sup> One is on exhibition in the Khartoum Museum.

were reluctant to abandon their ancestral form of burial. The mound form of superstructure also, which occurs in the earlier graves at Kurru, had been characteristic of Cush and Lower Nubia since 2000 B.C. at least.

Parts of the South and West Cemeteries at Meroë excavated by Reisner were contemporary with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. In the South Cemetery all the earlier burials on the highest part of the hill are small and simple graves, but as they advanced down the eastern slopes they became larger and more elaborate, until the latest tombs on the site at the bottom of the hill on the east are the pyramids of three kings and their queens (left of Pl. 13), who succeeded the last king buried at Nuri (with one intervening king buried at Jebel Barkal). The simple grave burials of the first ten generations fall into two classes:

- (a) bed burials, with the body not mummified, rich in amulets, bronze vessels and alabaster jars of types paralleled in the queens' tombs at Kurru.
- (b) pit burials, narrower than (a), with the body frequently in a coffin, sometimes of anthropoid form. These burials were almost always poorly furnished, such grave goods as occurred being contemporary with those found in (a).

The West Cemetery contained 795 graves including about 30 pyramids and others so much damaged that it is impossible to distinguish pyramid from mastaba. It was in constant use from the time of Piankhy to A.D. 350. The same types of burial occur, the mummy in the pit burials being frequently covered by a bead net, as in contemporary Egyptian practice.

While the local origin of the rulers of Cush is reflected in their custom of using a bed for burial of their dead (as had their predecessors at Kerma, see p. 69) rather than mummification in a coffin, the pit burials must be

those of a considerable group of Egyptians, priests, artists, craftsmen, scribes, etc., who lived with and worked for the local rulers.

Meroë, further south, lay within the area of the annual summer rains, and was therefore more favourable for cattle-raising and closer to the wealth of the central Sudan. At the time of Piankhy it must have been a centre of major importance, controlled by relatives of the royal family from Napata.

Inscriptions found in the ruined temples of Kawa opposite Dongola have thrown some light on the history of this period and particularly on the relationships of the royal family of Cush.<sup>1</sup> Brother-sister marriage within the family seems to have been the rule rather than the exception, and the piety of chief Alara towards Amen is several times mentioned in the inscriptions. Both these facts make it all the more probable that the founder of the Napatan ruling family was the hereditary (egyptianized) chief of Cush (possibly descended from those earlier chiefs of Cush whom we met at Kerma on p. 72).

Alara was succeeded by his brother Kashta (c. 751 B.C.), the succession normally passing from one brother to another, and then to the son of the eldest brother. Little is known of Kashta except that he somehow obtained control of Upper Egypt, assumed the title of 'king' but not the full titulature of a Pharaoh, and forced the Libyan high-priestess of Amen-Re<sup>4</sup> at Karnak, who was the daughter of Osorkon III the ruling king, to adopt his daughter Amenirdis. Osorkon retired to the Delta, probably finding Kashta as king of Cush and Upper Egypt, with control of the gold mines and the Nubian troops, more than a match for him.

Piankhy (751-716 B.C.), the son of Kashta, completed the conquest of Egypt. The one important historical

<sup>1</sup> Macadam, 1949, see esp. pp. 119 ff.



document for this is the great granite stela, which he set up at Jebel Barkal in the twenty-first year of his reign (731 B.C.), and which was found near the great temple of Amen-Re<sup>1</sup> in 1862 and is now in the Cairo Museum (Fig. 16)<sup>1</sup>. We have no information about the earlier part of his reign except what may be gathered from this stela, in which the king of Cush appears in possession of the Nile Valley as far north as Herakleopolis at the south end of the Fayum. The aggressiveness of Tefnakht, a local prince of Sais in the western Delta, the home of several Egyptian dynasties, provided an opportunity for the conquest of the Fayum and the Delta. It was reported to Piankhy that Tefnakht had obtained control of the Delta and the lower part of Upper Egypt, only Herakleopolis holding out against him and it was being besieged. Then came a report that Hermopolis (Ashmunein, between Minya and Asyut) had gone over to Tefnakht; and on this Piankhy sent his army north to check Tefnakht and reduce Hermopolis. A second army sent by Piankhy met the fleet of Tefnakht north of Thebes (Luxor) and defeated it, and then relieved Herakleopolis, driving the army that was besieging it back into the Delta. Piankhy, hearing that his forces had allowed the enemy to escape into the Delta, went to Egypt in person, celebrated the feast of Opē at Thebes (Luxor) and went on to take charge of the siege of Hermopolis, securing its surrender. The stela records how angry Piankhy was when he visited the stables of Nemareth (Nimrod) prince of Hermopolis, and found that his horses had not been properly fed during the siege. Piankhy was a great horse-lover. In the cemetery at Kurru was found a group of graves of horses in front of the southern group of queens' tombs. The graves were in four rows, two rows with four horses in each, and two with eight. The graves were side by side and equally spaced,

<sup>1</sup> Breasted, 1906, iv, §§ 796-883.



Fig. 16. The top of the stela of King Piankhy, showing the king receiving the submission of King Nemareth (leading horse), Osorkon IV and other princes

each horse buried standing with its head to the south. The second and third rows were attributed from amulets (now in the Khartoum Museum) to Shabako and Shebitku, and the first row therefore is almost certainly to be attributed to Piankhy and the fourth to Tanwetamani. The graves had all been plundered, but remains of trappings, including plume-carriers, silver head-bands, beads and amulets were found, indicating that they must be the teams of horses from the royal chariots. There can be little doubt that Piankhy instituted this custom. Besides his concern for the horses of Hermopolis, he pictures a horse on his famous stela, and had horses represented on the great wall which he built round the temple of Amen at Jebel Barkal.

After the fall of Hermopolis, Piankhy moved against the Delta, taking Memphis by assault, in which he made use of his fleet as well as his army. On this many of the princes of the Delta submitted, and he then went to Heliopolis and received the surrender of Osorkon IV as well. Tefnakht then took refuge in an inaccessible island in one of the western mouths of the Nile and persuaded Piankhy to accept his surrender. Regarding the conquest of Egypt as now complete, Piankhy returned home to Napata, erected the stela, and reconstructed the great temple of Amen-Re' there, it being he who moved the ram of Amenophis III there from Sulb.

But he had not placed Lower Egypt under a central administration based on Thebes, as the circumstances demanded. He had merely contented himself with leaving the princes of the Delta to pay tribute to him as king of Cush and Upper Egypt. Soon after his departure Tefnakht seems to have set himself up as king of Lower Egypt. Bekenrenef (Bocchoris) his son, certainly assumed royal titles about 720 B.C., and is counted by Manetho as the sole king of the Twenty-fourth Dynasty.

Shabako (c. 707-696 B.C.), the brother of Piankhy, established the Cushite administration firmly over the whole of Egypt. Manetho says he burned Bekenrenef alive. He transferred the capital from Napata to Thebes, and had his daughter adopted by Amenirdis as 'divine wife of Amen-Re'. He was now known throughout the ancient world as 'king of Cush and Mistr' (Egypt).

During the period 750-700 B.C. there was a kind of world war, and battles were being fought in Iraq, Iran, the Hittite country and elsewhere that were to leave Assyria the dominant power in western Asia. In 732 the Syrian kingdom fell to the Assyrians, and in 721, shortly after Piankhy had invaded Lower Egypt, Sargon took Samaria and transported the people of Israel to Iraq. Only the little kingdom of Judah lay between Assyria and Egypt. The Book of Kings<sup>1</sup> in the Bible describes Hezekiah's vacillations between submission to Assyria and co-operation with Egypt under the Cushites. Outwardly Egypt and Assyria maintained friendly relations, although a clash between them was inevitable. A fragment of a clay tablet found in the royal archives at Nineveh bears the impressions of the seals of Shabako and Sennacherib, who had succeeded his father Sargon.

The Cushites had not really united Egypt. 'And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians and they shall fight every one against his brother, and everyone against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof'<sup>2</sup>.

Externally the danger from Assyria was becoming more and more threatening. The Cushites may well have encouraged the little kingdom of Judah to resist the

<sup>1</sup> II Kings, xviii, xix.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah, xix, 2-3.



advance of Assyria, but after subduing Samaria, Sennacherib invaded Judah and encamped at Lachish. The payment of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold by Judah did not prevent Sennacherib from laying siege to Jerusalem. Shabako sent an army which the Book of Kings says was commanded by Taharqa, although he seems to have been too young. On this army Sennacherib poured contempt in the well-known words: 'Now behold thou trustest on the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it; so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him'.<sup>1</sup> But before the armies of Sennacherib and the Cushites met, an outbreak of plague in the Assyrian army caused Sennacherib to evacuate Palestine<sup>2</sup> (701 B.C.).

Shebitku<sup>3</sup> (698-683 B.C.), the son of Piankhy, who had been associated on the throne with his uncle Shabako for two years, became sole ruler on Shabako's death in 696 B.C. The threat of an Assyrian attack still hung over Egypt, and under these circumstances it was natural that Shebitku should break with tradition, and pass over his brother Khaliut and possibly other brothers, in order to associate his young brother Taharqa on the throne with him, and so assure the succession of a strong man (688 B.C.). On the copy of his famous stela of Year 6 found at Kawa<sup>4</sup> Taharqa wrote, 'I came from Nubia in the company of the king's brothers, whom his majesty had summoned that I might be there with him, since he loved me more than all his brethren and all his children, and I was preferred to them by his majesty'. From another stela found at Kawa we learn that this association of Taharqa on the throne with Shebitku took place at Thebes (Luxor).

<sup>1</sup> II Kings, xviii, 21.

<sup>2</sup> For another version of the story see Herodotus II, 141.

<sup>3</sup> Previously known as Shabataka.

<sup>4</sup> Macadam, 1949, pp. 22 ff, especially p. 28.

By the first stela we are informed that Taharqa was then aged 20, and that he afterwards proceeded to Lower Egypt with Shebitku.

Five years later, 683 B.C., Shebitku died and was buried alongside his predecessors in a pyramid at Kurru, and Taharqa (688-663 B.C.) became sole ruler. There is no reason to believe the statement of Eusebius that Shebitku was assassinated by his successor. In the same year there were exceptionally heavy rains in the Sudan. It even rained in Nubia, 'so that the hills glistened' if we are to take Taharqa's inscription literally, and the Nile in Egypt rose to the unprecedented height of 75.09 m. at Karnak, where the high level of the flood is recorded on the quay. Rats and other vermin were drowned and there was a record harvest. To a Sudanese to-day the good rains would be taken as a sure sign that the new reign was to be a fortunate one, and copies of the inscription that Taharqa set up to record it have been found at Tanis in the Delta, Quft in Upper Egypt, and Kawa in the Sudan. It is of interest as being the only mention in Egyptian literature of the true cause of the Nile flood.

The same inscriptions give the extent of Taharqa's empire, from Qebh-Hor in Asia to Retchu-Qabet, a hitherto unidentified locality in the Sudan also mentioned on the stela at Tumbus; and they record how after his coronation at Memphis, he sent for his mother Abar to see her son on the throne of Horus 'even as Isis saw her son Horus crowned upon the throne of his father' (Osiris). It is clear that the queen-mother held a most important position in Cush, a position which we shall see in the next chapter was maintained at Meroë.

Taharqa resided most of the time at Tanis in the Delta, in order to be well-informed about the course of events in Asia. He left Upper Egypt in charge of a famous Sudanese with the Egyptian name of Mentuemhat, who was

fourth prophet of Amen, prince of Thebes and governor of the south. Church and state seem to have been strictly separate at this time, for we never hear of the high priest of Amen; Mentuemhat held a comparatively subordinate position in the priestly hierarchy; and the chief spiritual power was at this time in the hands of the 'great wife of Amen', Shepenwepet II, who was a daughter of Piankhy and sister of Taharqa.

We have no record of any special preparations made by Taharqa for the coming conflict with Assyria, but he intrigued with the vassals of Assyria, particularly Tyre and Sidon, with the result that the king of Sidon rebelled and was put to death in 677 B.C. without apparently anything having been done by Taharqa to help him. Tyre also rebelled in 676 B.C., and in 671 the Assyrian king Esarhaddon, who had succeeded Sennacherib in 686 B.C., advanced against Egypt, crossing the desert of Sinai with the help of a camel train (one of the earliest mentions of the use of camels; see Fig. 17). He defeated Taharqa's army on the frontier, and fifteen days later reached Memphis and besieged it. Memphis fell to an Assyrian assault, Taharqa himself escaping, although his harem and children including his son Esanhuret were captured. Esarhaddon accepted the submission of the Delta princes and put up a stela on which he represented Taharqa as a negro led captive by a ring in his nose. This was merely an oriental way of expressing contempt. It is most improbable that Taharqa was a negro, although he may have had some negroid blood in his veins.<sup>1</sup> But Taharqa was not defeated. He had only retreated to Thebes, or perhaps further south, for Mentuemhat prince of Thebes is represented among the princes of Egypt

<sup>1</sup> See his colossal black granite statue from Jebel Barkal at present in Merowe Museum (Pl. 11a). But see also Schäfer, 1895, pl. vii, 3 and 4, and the well-known head in the Cairo Museum.



as paying tribute to Assyria. Esarhaddon left Egypt after proclaiming himself king of Upper and Lower Egypt, and soon after he had left, Taharqa returned with a fresh army, reoccupied Memphis (669 B.C.), recovered control of the Delta, and renewed his intrigues with Tyre. The following year Esarhaddon died when on a



Fig. 17. An Arab galloping on a camel (pursued by Assyrian cavalry). From the campaign of Ashur-bani-pal (c. 648 B.C.)

second expedition against Taharqa, and his son Ashur-bani-pal continued the campaign, leaving an account of it and of his defeat of Taharqa's army in the eastern Delta, of the reoccupation of Memphis, of Taharqa's flight to Thebes, and Ashur-bani-pal's arrival there in forty days, with Taharqa's consequent retreat to the west bank and the Assyrian occupation of Thebes (666 B.C.). Ashur-bani-pal then reinstated the Egyptian princes in their various districts as his vassals, amongst them Psammetik founder of the Twenty-sixth (Saite) Dynasty. But Mentuemhat of Thebes, who left statues and inscriptions there, records how he restored in the name of Taharqa the temples damaged by the Assyrians, and the



priests of Memphis in the 20th year of Psammetik I recorded that the Apis bull that died that year was born in the twenty-sixth year of Taharqa.

The new weapons of iron with which the Assyrian army was equipped were no doubt, together with its better discipline, the reason why it was victorious whenever it met the Cushites. The methods of smelting and forging iron must have been kept secret as long as possible, but there was anyhow little iron ore in Egypt except in the vicinity of the First Cataract and insufficient supplies of wood fuel for smelting it, and it is probable that iron was worked at Meroë in the Sudan before it was worked in Egypt. At Meroë (see p. 146), which by the time of Piankhy seems to have been a city comparable to Napata, there was plenty of iron ore and wood fuel, and it is possible that Taharqa may have instituted iron-working there soon after his contact with the Assyrians (see Pl. 15*b*). Iron objects certainly do occur at Meroë in graves that date from this period, but it is not until 600 B.C. or even later that iron objects become frequent in graves there, and it is partly to their lack of adequate supplies of the new weapon, that the loss of Egypt by the Cushites may be attributed.

In the great court in front of the temple of Amen at Karnak Taharqa erected a magnificent colonnade, of which one fine column still stands to-day. His name has also been found on the ruins of buildings at Medinat Habu (Thebes), at Edfu and at Tanis. But he naturally devoted most of his attention to the temples of his homeland. There he restored one of the halls of columns in the great temple of Amen-Re' at Jebel Barkal, and placed in it the grey granite altar inscribed with his name that now lies broken in the ruins of the temple. He also made a rock-cut temple in the corner of Jebel Barkal to the south of the great temple (Pl. 10*b*) and rebuilt the New

Kingdom temple close by; and it was almost certainly he who cut four colossal figures of himself out of the cliff face at Jebel Barkal (Pl. 9*b*), for a pair of cartouches has been found on the head of the best surviving figure, which as far as they have been read at present can only be his.<sup>1</sup> The cliff face at Jebel Barkal is of comparatively soft sandstone, and great boulders fall from it almost every year, so that it is not surprising (especially if



Fig. 18. The damaged top of a stela of King Taharqa, showing the king making an offering to the god Amen 'within the Holy Mountain'

the eroded condition of Taharqa's rock-cut temple (see Pl. 10*b*) is considered) that so little is left of this much larger copy of the temple of Rameses II at Abu Simbel, than which, though less old, it is much less well protected from wind and weather. Such a great undertaking is on

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1947. In Egypt colossal figures of the king usually stood in front of a temple, and the representation of Amen-Re' as literally 'within the Sacred Mountain' (Jebel Barkal) on a stela from Kawa dating from c. 678 B.C. (Macadam, 1949, p. 33 and pl. 12; see Fig. 18) suggests that there may still be an undiscovered shrine of Taharqa cut into the hill between the two central colossi.

a par with what is known of the king who built by far the largest pyramid of his dynasty in the royal cemetery at Nuri, which he started because there was no room for such a pyramid at Kurru. He also built the great temple at Kawa,<sup>1</sup> where he set up inscriptions, recording how in 685 B.C. on the way to Egypt he had noticed that the temple was of mud-brick, damaged by rain and all sanded up. Presumably the little temple of Tutankhamen was already in ruins and possibly buried beneath the sand, which was rapidly burying it again in 1948 after excavation. After his coronation in 684 B.C. he sent from Egypt an architect and craftsmen to build the great temple of sandstone, part at least of the temple being overlaid with gold-leaf. Trees were planted, and it is stated by Taharqa that a lake was dug, and though it has not yet been found, it would certainly have soon become sanded up. Vines were planted, and gardeners brought from Bahriya Oasis and Lower Egypt, and wine made; and two stelae give lists of the gifts made to Amen-Re<sup>2</sup> of Gem-aten between 687 and 679 B.C. They include quantities of gold, silver, bronze, and statues, vessels and altars of these materials, cloth, timber, etc.<sup>2</sup> Four experts in reckoning the time by star-transits and their instruments are mentioned; and among the women sent to serve the temple were the wives of the Delta princes who had resisted the extension of the rule of Cush over the Delta. The new temple was officially opened in 679 B.C.

<sup>1</sup> See Macadam, 1949, p. xii. Kawa was at this time called Gem-aten. From the evidence of Middle Kingdom statues found there it is probable that its founding (under another name) goes back to the time of Kerma. It was probably rebuilt and named Gem-aten by Amenophis III, of whom a scarab and other relics were found under the Meroitic temple there. A small temple was built there by Tutankhamen and a memorial tablet to Pa-nakht, who was governor of the south in his reign, was found there.

<sup>2</sup> For details see Macadam, 1949, pp. 5-8 and 33-6.

Other temples built by Taharqa include one on the left bank at Napata and one in the main fort at Semna West. The former is just upstream of modern Merowe near the probable site of the royal palace. Little but the foundations of it now remain.<sup>1</sup> The latter is entirely ruined. There is a doorway from it in the Khartoum Museum. There is also one column standing in ancient Meroë due north of the later palace area, that from its

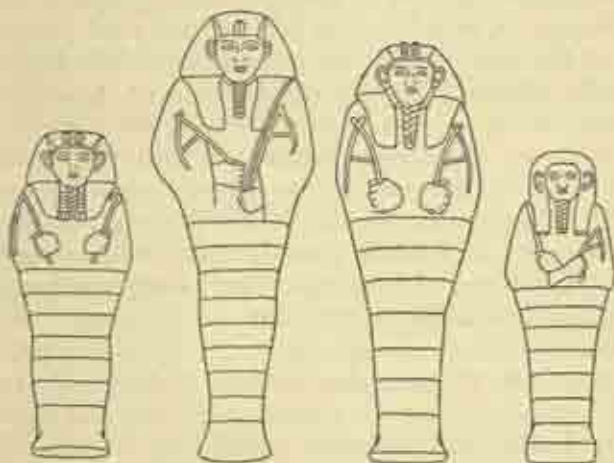


Fig. 19. Some *shabtis* of Napatan kings. Scale 1:5.

style can confidently be attributed to Taharqa. There is also a possible representation of Taharqa in the temple of Hatshepsut at Buhen opposite Wadi Halfa.<sup>2</sup> The most authentic portrait of him is presumably his colossal statue of black granite found near the Great Temple at Jebel Barkal and now in the Merowe Museum awaiting the construction of the national museum at Khartoum

<sup>1</sup> See Griffith, 1922, pls. li-lviii.

<sup>2</sup> Randall-MacIver and Woolley, 1911, pl. 24.



(Pl. 11a). There is also a large series of well worked *shabti* figures<sup>1</sup> in stone, which with a few stone vessels and small gold ornaments were left behind in the chamber under his pyramid at Nuri (Pl. 12a) by the robbers, who only left of this great king a few fragments of leg-bone.

King Taharqa died in 663/4 B.C. at the comparatively early age of 46/7 and was succeeded by his nephew Tanwetamani, the son of Shebitku and Qalhata a sister of Taharqa. A stela found at Jebel Barkal with the great stela of Piankhy (see p. 122) records how while Taharqa was still reigning, Tanwetamani had seen in a dream two snakes rise up, one on his right and the other on his left, and how the dream had been interpreted to mean that he would have a glorious career and recover the whole of Egypt from Assyria. So, on Taharqa's death he had hastened to Napata where he had been crowned king. Thence he descended the Nile, having a triumphal reception at Elephantine and at Thebes, where Mentuemhat was still governor and Shepenwepet II and Amenirdis II the high priestesses of Amen. He went on to Memphis, where he joined battle with the dynasts of the Delta who remained faithful to Assyria. The dynasts retreated to the Delta where they shut themselves up in their fortified towns. Tanwetamani then returned to Memphis and received the homage of those dynasts who had surrendered. The inscription ends here and does not record the sad finish of the tale, the arrival of the Assyrians and Tanwetamani's headlong flight to the south. Like Taharqa he took refuge in Thebes, and at the approach of the Assyrians retreated to Napata. This time Thebes

<sup>1</sup> Magic figures, sometimes buried by the box-full, inscribed with the name of the deceased and a text to ensure that the figure would do the manual labour for the deceased in the Fields of the Blessed, the original Egyptian conception of heaven being an agricultural one. They had been in use in Egypt since 1600 B.C. (see Fig. 19).

was taken and sacked by the troops of Ashur-bani-pal. The sack of Thebes was still remembered fifty years later, and when the prophet Nahum wanted to declare the fate that awaited Nineveh, he said: 'Art thou better than Ne-Amen' [Thebes] 'that was situate among the canals, and that had the Nile round about it for a rampart and a wall? Cush and Egypt were her strength . . . Yet was she carried away, she went into captivity: her young children were dashed in pieces at the top of all the streets: and they cast lots for her honourable men, and all her great men were bound in chains.'<sup>1</sup>

Mentuemhat seems to have survived even this disaster. The Assyrian army returned home, and there is no evidence that Tanwetamani ever tried to return to Thebes, although a stela in the Cairo Museum purchased in the Luxor area is dated from his eighth year (655 B.C.). It appears likely therefore that Psammetik I son of Necho of Sais, who had been set up as king by Ashur-bani-pal in 661 B.C., was not recognized immediately in Upper Egypt, which under Mentuemhat remained faithful to Cush. But in 654 B.C. after protracted negotiations and bargaining, which assured to them most of their former privileges in Upper Egypt, Mentuemhat and Shepenwepet II agreed to the adoption of Nitocris the daughter of Psammetik by Shepenwepet II. No more is heard of Amenirdis II, the daughter of Taharqa, whom she had already adopted, and it is probable that she returned to her native Napata. Psammetik had thus legalized his claim to Upper Egypt in the way that Piankhy (the father of Shepenwepet II) had done before him. The records of the high Nile after this were made at Karnak in the name of Psammetik and not of Tanwetamani, and it is clear that by 654 B.C. Tanwetamani had lost control of Upper Egypt. Nothing more is known of him, and he probably

<sup>1</sup> Nahum, iii, 8, 10.

died soon afterwards. He was not buried in Taharqa's new cemetery at Nuri, but in a small pyramid in the cemetery of his ancestors at Kurru, where, although the pyramid has not survived, one can still see the painted walls of the burial chamber that was beneath it, and also those of the burial chamber of his mother Qalhata. Both chambers are decorated with magical texts in Egyptian fashion.

Thus came to an end the period of about 75 years during which the Sudan was a world power, the effective kingdom of Cush and Misr. Tanwetamani's descendants continued to rule in Cush, styling themselves kings of Upper and Lower Egypt and laying claim to a sovereignty which they could no longer exercise. For roughly another thousand years after Tanwetamani his dynasty continued to rule the northern Sudan, with their capital first at Napata and then at Meroë that had previously been their southern sub-capital. The fact that the dynasty lasted until crushed by a foreign invasion is further strong support for the theory that the founders of the Napatan kingdom were the hereditary rulers of Cush and not foreigners from Libya. And right to the end some features of the Egyptian origin of their civilization survived, as we shall see in the next chapter, the last kings of Meroë for example nearly a thousand years later being still buried under pyramids, miserable little red-brick copies of the fine earlier pyramids of masonry.

How far south the domains of the king of Cush extended is not yet known, but a fine scarab of Shabako from a cemetery at Sennar on the Blue Nile,<sup>1</sup> several objects dating from this period from Jebel Moya between the White and Blue Niles,<sup>2</sup> and a scarab of the same date

<sup>1</sup> Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection no. 3643. See Arkell, 1950 A, p. 40 and Arkell, 1951 c.

<sup>2</sup> Addison, 1949, pp. 117-8 and plate 1.

from an occupation site on which the new district office of Kosti on the White Nile has been built,<sup>1</sup> suggest that the kingdom of Cush certainly included what is now known as the central Sudan. This is only reasonable when one considers the manpower that must have been needed for the conquest of Egypt and campaigns in Palestine. In fact it would not be surprising if the kingdom stretched as far as the Sudd in the vicinity of the mouth of the River Sobat. And the excavation of sites at Zankor and Abu Sofyan in Kordofan may one day show that it extended three hundred miles or so west of the Nile. From the former comes an arrow-head<sup>2</sup> of similar type to those found at Kurru (see p. 119, and Fig. 15). There is, however, no archaeological evidence that Darfur was included in the kingdom of Cush.

<sup>1</sup> Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection, no. 3568.

<sup>2</sup> See Edmonds, 1940, p. 193 and plate i (c) opp. p. 192.

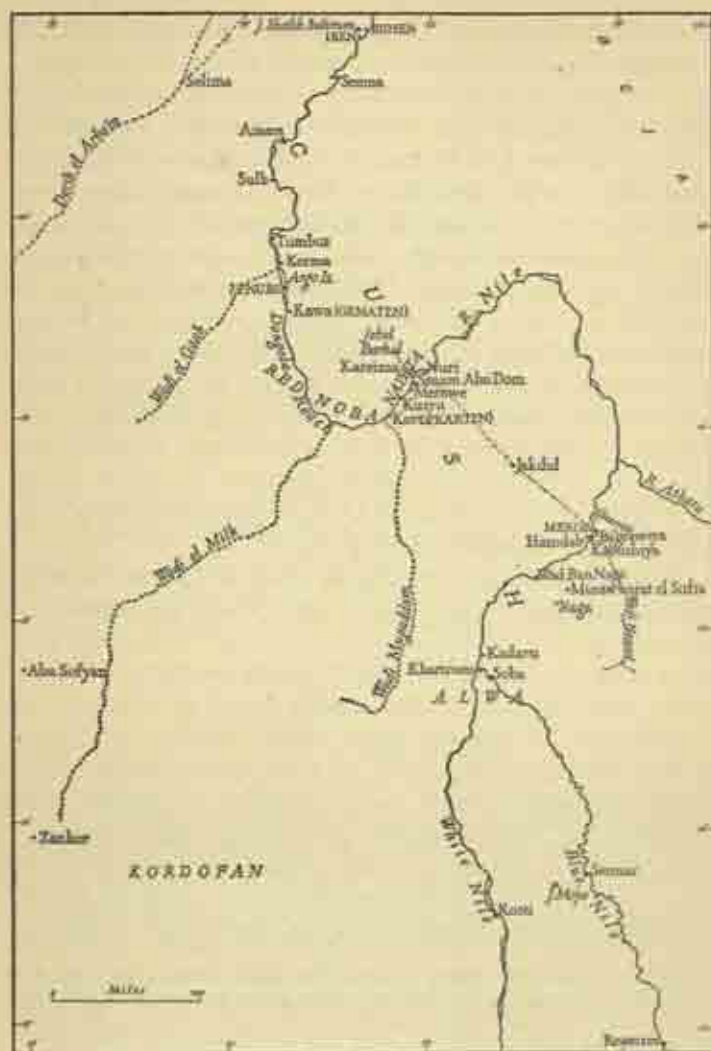


## CHAPTER VII

### Cush after the retreat from Egypt

(660 B.C.—c. A.D. 350)

DURING the next thousand years the kingdom founded by Kashta and Piankhy continued to flourish in the Sudan, its kings still using the traditional royal titles of Egypt, although after the final repulse of Tanwetamani from Egypt by the Assyrians, they never again held sway in that land. Lower Nubia (the Wadi Halfa-Shellal reach), however, was at times disputed territory and at times the kings of Cush controlled this reach as far as Kalabsha. Their claim to be kings of Egypt is however significant, for right to the end of this period the outward forms of their civilization, their court ceremony and their religion was Egyptian, the heritage that the earlier lords of Cush had received from the Egyptian occupation of their homeland during the Egyptian New Kingdom, and of their close contact with the Egyptian priests of Amen-Re' at Barkal that led to their conquest of Egypt. It is true that that civilization and religion became gradually imbued with ideas that had their origin south of Egypt, and that as the influence first of Greece and then of Rome became paramount in the Mediterranean area, those influences also made themselves felt to some small extent away up the Nile at distant Meroë. But to the end it was the egyptianized kingdom of Napata running gradually downhill to a miserable and inglorious end. There were interludes of prosperity when contact with the outside world was free and friendly, and new inspiration and energy (the effect of new ideas from outside) were infused into the kingdom, but they became rarer, until the last two or three centuries were ones of unrelieved degeneration and gloom when compared to the glories of the past.



Map 7. The Upper Nile Valley, 725 B.C.-A.D. 350

Our knowledge of this period is still scanty, but it is very much greater than it was thanks to the archaeological excavations of Dr Reisner at the royal cemeteries of Nuri (Pl. 12a), Meroë (Pl. 13), and Barkal (Pl. 9a) already mentioned on p. 115 and the excavations of Professor and Mrs F. Ll. Griffith at Faras, Sanam Abu Dom and Kawa.<sup>1</sup> For historical inscriptions are rare throughout the period, although a few more have recently been added by the Oxford University excavations at the temples of Kawa opposite Dongola.<sup>2</sup> Each inscription will be mentioned in its turn. But it is owing to the work of Dr Reisner that it is possible to give the king-lists with approximate dates on pp. 151-2, 157-8 and 169<sup>3</sup>, and largely to his work and that of Professor Griffith that the table of names and relationships of the royal family of Napata could be compiled.<sup>4</sup> Abbreviated forms of that table are given here and on p. 152.

While Napata was the original home of the royal family, the excavation of the South and West Cemeteries at Meroë (see p. 146) has shown that from the beginning of the kingdom of Cush (the Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt) there was a branch of that family living at Meroë. The relations of the Napatan royal family, resident at Meroë in the first place for reasons of state, were buried in the South Cemetery, while the aristocracy of Meroë were buried in the West Cemetery. With the growing economic importance of Meroë and the dwindling importance of Napata due primarily to Cush being cut off from Egypt, the kings gradually spent more of their time at Meroë.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. J. Garstang too excavated the vitally important town site of Meroë in 1909-14, but unfortunately those excavations are only inadequately published in Garstang, Sayce and Griffith, 1911 and Garstang, 1911-16.

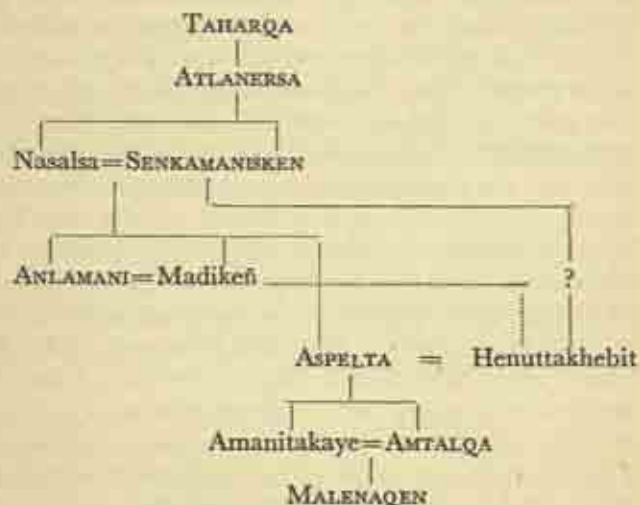
<sup>2</sup> Macadam, 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Reisner, 1923 A, pp. 75-6.

<sup>4</sup> Dunham and Macadam, 1949.

Eventually, as we shall see, they made it their chief residence and took queens from the aristocracy of Meroë as well as from the original royal family of Napata.

The first period of the kingdom of Cush after the loss of Egypt<sup>1</sup> extends approximately from 653 to 538 B.C. and covers the reigns of the six great kings, whose names are shown in the following table of relationship:



Their pyramids at Nuri (Pl. 12a) are the largest ones there after the pyramid of Taharqa, and they stand in a row in front of it. It was the excavation of them that gave the order of succession and approximate dates of the kings buried in them, the names of all but two of whom had been known before from inscribed objects. Judging from the size of their pyramids, the objects neglected by robbers in the much plundered burial chambers under the pyramids, and the traces of their

<sup>1</sup> Called by Dunham 'The Napatan Period, phase 2'.



building activity at both Jebel Barkal and Meroë, these kings must have been rich and powerful despite the loss of Egypt, and the Egyptian culture that they inherited must have been maintained fairly pure. For instance, from the burial chambers of the pyramids of Anlamani and Aspelta (see Fig. 14) were recovered massive granite sarcophagi weighing about fifteen tons each (the lid alone weighing four tons) and decorated with texts wholly traditional such as were used in Egyptian burials from New Kingdom to Saite times, and including passages from the Pyramid Texts, the Book of the Dead and texts from the royal sarcophagi of the Eighteenth Dynasty. The sarcophagus of Anlamani is now in the Merowe Museum awaiting the construction of new buildings for the national museum at Khartoum, and that of Aspelta is at Boston.<sup>1</sup> Other pyramids were identified by the discovery of inscribed objects, of which examples may be seen in the Khartoum Museum. They include stone vases, amulets in gold or semi-precious stone, a few gold vases and silver libation bowls, *shabti* figures (see Fig. 19) in blue faience, and foundation deposits with inscribed faience cups or plaques as well as pots, querns, model tools, specimens of materials and the parts of a sacrificed ox, which were usually found under all four corners of the pyramid. Rarely an inscribed tablet or altar was found or an inscription on the walls of the burial chamber. In any one reign there were certain master-masons, sculptors, scribes, jewellers, faience-workers and so on. By the next reign some of them were dead and had been replaced by other men, often not quite so skilled as the old craftsmen, while some still survived to produce exactly similar work to that produced in the previous reign. Thus by comparing the development of each craft of which examples were found in the tombs the archaeologist has been able to place those

<sup>1</sup> Dunham, 1945.

tombs in their correct order in time, and he has been able to get a cross-check on his study of the kings' tombs from a similar study of the queens' tombs. Such a study reveals the cultural development or degeneration of the country at the time.

Historical inscriptions, without which it is impossible to reconstruct the history of the reigns with certainty, are rare. We have none from the reigns of Atlanersa (653-643 B.C.) and Senkamaniskén (643-623 B.C.). There is one from the reign of Anlamani (623-593 B.C.) from the temple built by Taharqa at Kawa opposite Dongola.<sup>1</sup> In it is recorded how the king visited Kawa, created a new priestly office of Third Prophet, and attended a seven-day festival at which he caused the god Amen-Re<sup>4</sup> to appear in public. It also records an expedition sent by the king against the country of the Belhe, presumably one of the branches of the nomadic Beja living east of the Nile, who had been raiding Kawa and other rich settlements on the Nile. We shall notice in two other inscriptions before 300 B.C. preoccupation with similar raids by the Beja; and they are probably a symptom of the decreasing power of the central authority with the consequently resulting decrease in internal security. The inscription says that the expedition killed all the Belhe men except four, who were brought back captive with all the Belhe women, children and animals, the people being apparently given to the temple as slaves. The inscription also records how the Queen-Mother Nasalsa came to behold the glory of her son on the throne—this is clearly in imitation of the account of Queen Abar's visit to Egypt to see her son Taharqa on the throne of the Pharaohs (see p. 127)—and how Anlamani dedicated his sisters to be sistrum-players before the god Amen, one each at Napata, Kawa, Pnubs (Argo or Tumbus) and Sanam Abu Dom. And

<sup>1</sup> Macadam, 1949, pp. 46 ff.

we know from the Dedication Stela of King Aspetla that the sister dedicated to Sanam Abu Dom was Madikeñ, the daughter of Queen Nasalsa, and sister-wife of King Anlamani.<sup>1</sup>

Two stelae of Aspetla (593-568 B.C.) were found at Jebel Barkal,<sup>2</sup> one of which suggests that the influence of the priests of Amen was still strong, for it records how on the death of Anlamani, the princes were presented to the god Amen-Re<sup>3</sup> in the great temple at Jebel Barkal and the god chose Aspetla (Pl. 11*b*). But the strong man then, as at many other times in history, was no doubt able to secure his own election; and in the other stela Aspetla lines up the priests to hear his appointment of Madikeñ as priestess of Amen. A third stela from Jebel Barkal<sup>4</sup> may also date from this reign, but the king's name has been erased. It records the punishment of certain priests, and shows that conflict between king and priests did occur.

There are no other historical inscriptions known so far from this period, but there are inscribed ruins which show that it was one of considerable building activity. Atlanersa, the first king of the period, began the construction of a temple at Jebel Barkal which was completed by his successor Senkamanisken. We have already noticed on p. 118 that Senkamanisken was the king who introduced the custom of adding a third chamber under the pyramid. Statues of all five kings from Atlanersa to Amtalqa (568-553 B.C.) were found at Jebel Barkal, and Anlamani and Aspetla left their names there on a building that Reisner thought was a coronation hall. Fragments of a granite stela of Aspetla were found in the Sun Temple

<sup>1</sup> Macadam, 1949, p. 50 n.

<sup>2</sup> One is in the Cairo Museum, no. 692 and the other at Paris in the Louvre. See Budge, 1912, pp. lxxxix-ci and 89-112.

<sup>3</sup> Also in the Cairo Museum, no. 693. Budge, 1912, pp. ci-cix and 113-16.



(see p. 150) at Meroë, which may indicate that there was a temple on this site built either by Aspelta or one of his predecessors.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing is heard of relations between the kingdom of Cush and the outside world at this time, and one suspects that there were few if any contacts. In any case Psammetik II (593-588 B.C.) of Egypt seems to have ensured that there were no relations with Egypt by sending an expedition which included Greek mercenaries to occupy the Shellal-Wadi Halfa reach. This expedition was of such importance that it was still remembered 150 years later.<sup>2</sup> Some of the mercenaries scribbled their names in the Carian script at Abu Simbel (Pl. 19*a*), and there are similar Carian names cut in the temple at Buhen opposite Wadi Halfa,<sup>3</sup> and on Jebel Sheikh Suliman south of Buhen behind the ancient port of Iken. And the difference in style between the script of the Abu Simbel graffiti and those near Buhen suggests that a garrison was probably kept near the Second Cataract (perhaps at Iken) in the Twenty-sixth Dynasty or the Persian period that followed it. It is also interesting to record that in one of the graves near the fortified hill town at Ikhmindi on the west bank just south of Dakka and opposite the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi, were found several spear-heads in the then novel metal iron, which are of a type similar to spear-heads known from the settlements of foreign mercenaries at Daphnae, Naukratis, and elsewhere in Egypt.<sup>4</sup> This

<sup>1</sup> Garstang, Sayce and Griffith, 1911, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> It is mentioned by Herodotus, II, 161.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce, 1895, pp. 39, 40.

<sup>4</sup> Firth, 1927, plate 29, 1. There is also in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford a three-bladed bronze arrow-head (no. 1883/113) found at Elephantine, of the same type as those used by the Carians and Ionians of Psammetik I at Tell Defenuh and published in Petrie, 1887, pl. xxxix, 8-16 and p. 77.



suggests that Ikhmindi was also garrisoned by Greek mercenaries.

That already during this period the king had a residence at Meroë was disclosed by the excavations of Garstang who found the names of Aspetla, Amtalqa and Malenagen on blocks and column drums which had been in the palace immediately west of the great temple of Amen there.<sup>1</sup> These royal names also occurred on smaller objects such as the faience handles of sistra found in this palace.

Meroë was situated on the east bank of the Nile between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts about four miles north of the railway station of Kabushiya in Shendi District. In fact its suburbs no doubt stretched as far as Kabushiya, for there is a temple site about a mile east of the railway station on the banks of the great Wadi Hawad and another at Hamdab between Kabushiya and the modern hamlet of Bagrawiya which is alongside the heart of the ancient city. Bagrawiya probably enshrines a Meroitic word, which is usually transliterated as *paqar* and translated 'crown prince'. The oldest known form of the name Meroë, which came to us through the Greek, is Barua. The actual site of the town was no doubt determined by its being a suitable landing-place for boats, and Garstang found traces of a stone-built quay there. Immediately above the level of the high Nile on the river bank is the area of the walled palaces, with to the north of it what was probably a great dais on which the king made his public appearance on state occasions, and to the north of that again stands the single column of a small building that from its style can be confidently attributed to the time of Taharqa.<sup>2</sup> Immediately east of the palace area, just outside the palace wall, stretch in an eastward direction for

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, 1912, pp. 58-9.

<sup>2</sup> Garstang, 1913, p. 77.

120 metres the crumbling sandstone ruins<sup>1</sup> of the great temple of Amen (Pl. 15*a*), built entirely on Egyptian lines and no doubt modelled on the great temple at Napata that lies under Jebel Barkal. To either side of the temple site to north and south for half a mile or so stretch the ruins of the ancient town. They also stretch eastward as far as the railway line, which gives many residents of the Sudan the only view they get of this long-famed capital of the country, a strew of broken burnt-brick, mostly to the west of the line, that shows where the town used to be, and a glimpse (a few miles to the east) of the pyramids of the Northern Cemetery (Pl. 13) against a background of the sandstone hills that encircle the plain of Meroë on the north and east. An unusually observant traveller may notice several large black mounds through one of which the railway is actually cut. These are the famous iron slag-heaps of Meroë (Pl. 15*b*) that caused Professor Sayce to say that Meroë must have been once the Birmingham of the northern Sudan,<sup>2</sup> as indeed it must. There is plenty of iron in the Nubian Sandstone hills just mentioned, and when Meroë was founded there must have been plenty of wood for the fuel necessary to smelt it in the little depression south-east of the town, which Herodotus in his description of the Sun Temple calls a meadow, and where grass and bushes still struggle to survive to-day.

Just to the east of the railway line are the ruins of two or three smaller temples, one of which must date several centuries before the fall of Meroë, apparently built on a mound which was covered with iron slag, and, if so, eloquent testimony of the early date of the iron industry. Indeed there is little doubt that it was through Meroë that the knowledge of iron-working spread south and west throughout negro Africa.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, 1912, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> See Wainwright, 1945, pp. 5-36, etc.

Out in the plain east of these temples is the massive masonry platform on which was built the famous Temple of the Sun<sup>1</sup>, and beyond that again are the sadly ruined pyramids of the Western Cemetery, in which were buried the notables of Meroë throughout the whole of its occupation. A mile or so further east is the conspicuous row of royal pyramids on a prominent ridge running north and south in which were buried the kings and reigning queens of Meroë from about 300 B.C. onwards. When one reaches this ridge one sees, across a little sandy valley to the south-east, a few more pyramids at the base of a little black hill (Pl. 13). This is the older South Cemetery in which were buried the relatives of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty who governed Meroë from its earliest days, the pyramids being those of the first kings to be buried in Meroë, when the custom of being taken back to Napata to be buried near the Sacred Hill of Barkal was abandoned after 308 B.C. The quarries from which the sandstone blocks for all these pyramids were hewn may be seen in the hills east of the pyramids, while the quarries from which the stone was no doubt brought by river for the buildings that adorned the town itself, are situated round Umm Ali to the north.

It is convenient to start the second period in the history of Cush after the loss of Egypt at 538 B.C., the approximate date of the accession of Analmā'aye (538-533 B.C.), by which time it is highly probable that the seat of government and the royal residence had been transferred to Meroë. Huge herds of cattle, sheep and goats were no doubt amassed by the inhabitants of Napata, who must have been very wealthy during the heyday of the kingdom; and the result would have been serious over-grazing of the country on either side of the river in Dongola,

<sup>1</sup> Partly published in Garstang, Sayce and Griffiths, 1911. See also p. 150 below.



with consequent erosion and the advance of the desert. As soon as that happened Meroë would be a much more favourable site for the capital than Napata, which was anyhow well north of the centre of gravity of the kingdom once Egypt was lost. Not only was Meroë more favourable for cattle-raising and the centre of the now important iron-working industry, the methods of working which were no doubt for a long time jealously guarded royal secrets,<sup>1</sup> but it was nearer the central Sudan where regular annual summer rains enable large grain crops to be grown.

The chief reason for thinking that the transfer of the capital from Napata to Meroë took place in the sixth century and not in the fourth century B.C. is that immediately after the reign of Malenaken (553-538 B.C.) the average number of queens buried at Napata (Kurru and Nuri) dropped suddenly from over four per reign to less than one and a half per reign, and then remained constant. The cause is unlikely to have been poverty, for other indications of increasing poverty suggest that its oncoming was gradual. There is in the Western Cemetery a group of over twenty unusually large tombs—whether mastabas or pyramids it is often impossible to say, for many of their stone blocks have been removed<sup>2</sup>—which belong to just this time and are probably those of the missing queens, the custom having arisen for half of the queens to be buried at Meroë. No doubt because of the increased importance of Meroë and the longer residence of the

<sup>1</sup> This may account for the strange superstitions connected with iron-working that still survive in the Sudan, particularly in the west, where it is a deadly insult to call a man a blacksmith, although the blacksmiths of the Zaghawa, while not intermarrying with the rest of the tribe, are valued and important members of the community.

<sup>2</sup> As late as 1938 a local stone-mason was making tombstones and boundary stones from them.



king there, it had become customary for the king to take queens from the Meroitic aristocracy, and naturally those queens preferred to be buried in their homeland.<sup>1</sup>

The great temple of Amen at Meroë was built during this period, and the Sun Temple was by now far-famed; as we have seen, an early form of this temple was probably in existence by the reign of Aspetta (593-568 B.C.). It was known to Herodotus, the Greek traveller, who in his account of the expedition made by Cambyses against Ethiopia,<sup>2</sup> for which there is no evidence from Egypt or the Sudan, describes the Table of the Sun as in a meadow outside the city. This is an apt description of the site of the Sun Temple, which is outside the city of Meroë on the east side, on the edge of a depression well described as a meadow, for in it still to-day grass and bushes grow better than on the surrounding gravel plain. In another place<sup>3</sup> Herodotus confirms that in his day (c. 455 B.C.) Meroë was the capital (*μητρόπολις*) of the 'other Ethiopians'. In its final form the Sun Temple<sup>4</sup> consisted of a shrine on a masonry platform, which was approached by a sloping ramp. On the platform was built a cloister with a single line of columns running all round the sanctuary. This was approached by an ascent of nine steps. Its walls and floor were covered with glazed tiles, those on the wall being light blue, the colour of the sky, and a large golden yellow solar disk was built into the west wall facing the entrance. The inscriptions are in Meroitic hieroglyphs, not completed in one place; and on the outer wall of the platform there are represented the defeat of enemies who are being slaughtered in

<sup>1</sup> See Dunham, 1947 A, pp. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Book III, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Book II, 29.

<sup>4</sup> Excavated by Garstang and partly published in Garstang, Sayce and Griffith, 1911; see pp. 25-7.

various ways, a triumphal procession, and other scenes, in which some of the weapons are novel, and appear possibly to be the origin of weapons which are now peculiar to the nomadic Tuareg of north-west Africa. On one part of the wall of the sanctuary, the conqueror's foot trod on the head of a prisoner wearing a Greek metal helmet.<sup>1</sup> Professor Sayce<sup>2</sup> thought that these reliefs show a strikingly Greek character, and pointed out that Homer shows that the Greeks of his day were acquainted with Cush, which they called Ethiopia. In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* it is described as the land to which the gods went for an annual feast, the *Iliad* also mentioning the annual migration of the European stork ('cranes') to central Africa, 'the land of the pygmies'. Sayce saw, with some reason, that this suggests that Greek trade with Meroë probably went back to this period. Trade often follows the flag, though it also precedes it, as at Kerma, (see p. 69), and it is more than likely that some of the Greek merchants who accompanied the Carian mercenaries as far as the Second Cataract (p. 145), went on to trade at Napata and Meroë.

Little is known of the actual history of this period. The names of the kings and the order of their succession are known from Reisner's excavation of their pyramids at Nuri:<sup>3</sup>

	<i>Approximate date</i>
Analma'aye	538-533 B.C.
Amani-natake-lebte	533-513
Karkamani	513-503
Amani-astabarqa	503-478

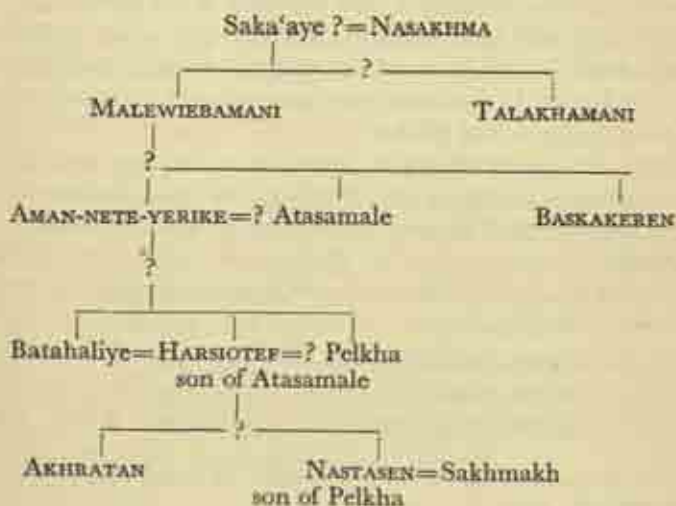
<sup>1</sup> This fragment is now in the Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection no. 5092.

<sup>2</sup> Garstang, Sayce and Griffith, 1911, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup> Reisner, 1918; Reisner, 1923 A, p. 75; and Dunham and Macadam, 1949, p. 149.

	<i>Approximate date</i>
Si'aspiqa	478-458
Nasakhma	458-453
Malewiebamani	453-423
Talakhamani	423-418
Aman-nete-yerike	418-398
Baskakeren	398-397
Harsiotef	397-362
. . . . . <sup>1</sup>	362-342
Akhratan	342-328
Nastasen	328-308

From such inscriptional material as has survived it has been possible to construct the following table of relationship of the kings from Nasakhma to Nastasen:



<sup>1</sup> Unknown king buried within the only pyramid still standing at Kurru, which Reisner found was unsafe to excavate.

From the grave goods left behind by robbers in these royal tombs it is possible to trace the gradual degeneration which was occurring at this time in the culture that had been inherited from Egypt. There is a marked decrease in the knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphs in the reign of Malewiebamani, who, judging from the size of his pyramid and the richness of its funerary furniture, seems in other ways to have been a great and prosperous king. But from his reign onwards pots are badly made, the work of the goldsmiths is clumsy, there are hardly any objects of faience and there are no heart-scarabs. Stone vessels were no longer made locally, only a few alabaster jars being apparently imported from Egypt. The reliefs in the pyramid chapels degenerate, some being almost barbarous, and the Egyptian language is clearly no longer understood, the first three out of the five royal names (usual in Egypt) becoming stereotyped and transmitted from king to king as part of the royal titles.

Only three historical inscriptions are known from this period so far. The earliest is the great inscription of Amanete-yerike (*c.* 418-398 B.C.) on the wall of Taharqa's temple at Kawa.<sup>1</sup> It was written in Egyptian hieroglyphs, but the shapes of the signs are debased, and it is clear that, although Egyptian was still the official written language, it was no longer being spoken. The rather uncouth name of this king means 'begotten of Amen of Nē' (the Egyptian name of Thebes which may be presumed to have come with Amen to Napata). Napata in this inscription is described as 'the holy hill of the land of Nehesi' (see p. 41) showing that it was already being looked on as a remote outlying district by Meroë, where the inscription was no doubt composed. It records how the king was forty-one when his predecessor Talakhamani

<sup>1</sup> Macadam, 1949, pp. 90 ff.



died at Meroë,<sup>1</sup> and the Rehrehis, probably a southern section of the Beja, who were encroaching on the country between the Nile and the Atbara, had raided cattle and some captives from it. The king first sent the army against the Rehrehis and repulsed them; and then set forth, probably by the overland route, from Meroë to Napata for his coronation. He reached Napata in nine days, and went to the palace at Jebel Barkal and was given 'the ceremonial cap of the land of Nubia'.<sup>2</sup> He then proceeded to the temple of Amen-Re 'who is in the Sacred Hill' (see Fig. 18), where he was recognized as king by the god.

The king then sailed downstream to Kartei the largest town between Napata and Kawa, the site of which has not yet been located (?? Korti). It was probably on the great bend of the Nile. It had been raided by 'western desert-dwellers called Meded', probably the Beja (Medju) again, and the king sent a punitive expedition against them before going to Kawa, which he reached 17 days after leaving Napata. At Kawa he was presented by the god with a bow and bronze-tipped arrows. He then went on to Pnubs,<sup>3</sup> which was quite close and was probably the temple in Argo Island. The journey seems to have been done in a day. He went to the temple of Amen-Re in Pnubs and presented the god with four territories<sup>4</sup> which had been captured with the aid of the god; and then returned to Kawa and presented the god there with seven captured territories.<sup>5</sup> At Kawa he cleared the

<sup>1</sup> This confirms that the kings were living at Meroë long before it became the custom to bury them there.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the cotton cap that was the symbol of royalty in Christian Nubia (Fig. 24) and the horned cap of the Fung sultans (p. 211).

<sup>3</sup> Pnubs means 'the house of the *nebag* tree' (*Zizyphus spina-Christi*).

<sup>4</sup> Gr-imm-st, Skat, Trht and Mwrs, not yet identified. Presumably in the land of the Meded who raided Kartei.

<sup>5</sup> Mrkr, Irtkr, Ishmt, Grkn, Irm, Tayi-nbt and Ir.

approach to the temple which had been sanded up for 42 years, received a state-visit from the queen-mother, communed with the god Amen and arranged for the repair of certain buildings.

The next inscription is the stela of King Harsiotef (397-362 B.C.) which dates from the 35th year of his reign. It was found at Jebel Barkal and is now in the Cairo Museum. On it he records nine campaigns, and mentions various place names which it should be possible one day to locate with greater accuracy than can now be attained.<sup>1</sup> The Medju (the modern Beja of the semi-desert east of the Nile Valley) were the enemy in three of the campaigns, and in three others it was the Rehreh, who had invaded the island of Meroë two reigns before. In another campaign some rebels from Aqna (which sounds like Iken, the port on the west bank near the Second Cataract, see p. 63) fled to Aswan; this suggests that at this time Lower Nubia (the Wadi Halfa-Shellal reach) was a no-man's land between Cush and Egypt. At the beginning of the stela Harsiotef records how he learned in a dream that Amen had given him the throne, and he journeyed to Napata and was accepted by Amen, and then visited the temples at Gem-aten (Kawa), Pnubs (probably Argo) and the shrine of Bast at Tare (or Tore, not yet located, but apparently between Napata and Meroë). His building activities at Napata and elsewhere are recorded and also the festivals which he established in twelve towns. The similarity in subject matter between this inscription and that of Aman-nete-yerike is to be noticed. The days of originality were long past.

The other inscription<sup>2</sup> is that of Nastasen (328-308 B.C.), the last king to be buried at Nuri. He came to the throne

<sup>1</sup> Budge, 1912, pp. cix-cxviii and 117-39.

<sup>2</sup> Budge, 1912, pp. cxviii-cxxxii and pp. 140-69.

at about the time when Alexander the Great included Egypt in his empire. The stela, which was obtained by Lepsius for the Berlin Museum, no doubt originally came from Jebel Barkal. It records how Nastasen was summoned from Meroë to Napata and given by Amen the sovereignty over 'Ilt, perhaps Alwa, the country round Khartoum, of which Soba (12 miles up the Blue Nile) was the capital. Only trial excavations have been made at Soba, but there is in the grounds of the Khartoum Cathedral a ram with an inscription in Meroitic hieroglyphs on it, which was brought from Soba to Khartoum by Gordon. It indicates that by this time Soba was certainly a town of importance. Like Harsiotef, Nastasen also visited the temples at Kawa, Pnubs and Tare on his accession. Like that king too he records a number of military expeditions, which give the impression that the country was becoming increasingly insecure. Beja raiders were able to steal from the temples at Kawa and Tare gold objects which had been there since the reign of Aspelta, and in both cases the raiders got away with their loot, and all the king did was to record the gift of other objects from his own treasure to replace the things stolen. One of his expeditions was against someone called Cambasauden, who was once thought to have been Cambyses (see p. 150), but Reisner's excavations have shown that Nastasen lived long after the alleged invasion of Cambyses, which probably never reached the frontiers of Cush at all.

There is some uncertainty about the history of the kingdom about this time. At Jebel Barkal there are two groups of pyramids, the earliest of which must be dated on grounds of style to early in the third century B.C. Reisner thought that it was due to a king with a Napatan mother and his immediate descendants who intervened between Nastasen and Arakakaman, refused to abandon the old tradition of burial at Napata and set up a



short-lived kingdom at Napata to rival the branch of the family represented by Arakakaman and his successors. They are the kings buried in the South Cemetery at Meroë:

Arakakaman	?308-280 B.C.
Amanislo	280-265 B.C.
Bartare	265-255 B.C.

Amanislo however must have controlled the northern part of the kingdom as well as Meroë, for he placed his name on the two lions which were made for Sulb by Amenophis III (Pl. 6a) and removed them to Barkal<sup>1</sup>; and the name of Bartare may occur at Kawa.<sup>2</sup> There is, therefore, some doubt whether there was any First Independent Kingdom of Napata, although inscribed objects found at Kawa give what may be the names of the four kings of this kingdom: Ary, who built a temple at Kawa, possibly the latest one of which the ruins still exist, Amansabrak, Piankh-yerike-qa and Arnekh-amani.<sup>3</sup>

The third phase is marked by the abandonment of the South Cemetery at Meroë, which was full, and the burial of the kings on the commanding ridge east of the city, in what is known as the North Cemetery (Pl. 13). Reisner's excavation of that cemetery has made possible the compilation of the following king-list:<sup>4</sup>

Aman . . . tekha	255-242 B.C.
Himayka	242-225
Arqamani (=Ergamenes)	225-200
Adikhalamani (?)	200-180
Naqyrinsan	180-160

<sup>1</sup> See Edwards, 1939, pl. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Macadam, 1949, p. 74 n.

<sup>3</sup> Macadam, 1949, pp. 78 ff.

<sup>4</sup> It is given here modified after discussion with Dr M. F. Laming Macadam.



Queen Nahirqa	160-150
Shanak-dakhete (?), see Pl. 14a	150-125
( <i>Pyramid N. XIII</i> )	125-100
Ta'nyidamani (? <i>Pyramid N. XX</i> )	100-80
Teriteqas (? <i>Pyramid N. XXI</i> )	80-60
Queen Amanirenas	60-45
Akinidad (if he came to the throne)	
Queen Amanishakhete ( <i>Pyramid N. VI</i> )	45-25
Queen Naldamak ( <i>Pyramid Barkal VI</i> )	
Amanikhabale (? <i>Pyramid N. II</i> )	25-15
Natakamani ( <i>Pyramid N. XXII</i> )	15-A.D. 15
Queen Amanitëre ( <i>Pyramid N. I</i> )	15-A.D. 15

The succession of these rulers and the twenty-seven rulers who followed them in the North Cemetery was worked out by detailed comparison of the pyramids and the objects found in them. This gave definite archaeological groups in which there was gradual, but not necessarily contemporary, development or degeneration in each craft. In one or two cases a pyramid has been built so close to another that it is easy to see which is the earlier. As a general principle a ruler naturally chose for his own pyramid the most desirable site that remained unoccupied.

Judged mainly by the size and quality of the pyramids, the reigns of Ergamenes and his five immediate successors are seen to be those of the greatest prosperity. Inscriptions in temples at Philae and Dakka in Lower Nubia show that Ergamenes was the contemporary of Ptolemy IV (Philopator)<sup>1</sup>. In a temple at Philae the inmost and earliest hall was built by Ptolemy IV, the entrance hall

<sup>1</sup> Not of Ptolemy II as stated by Diodorus, who was writing long after the event. See Mahaffy, 1899, pp. 139-41. A colossal statue found at Jebel Barkal and now in the Merowe Museum has been assigned to Ergamenes, see Dunham 1947 3, pp. 63-5 and pl. xii.

being built by Ergamenes, his work being in part defaced and in part enlarged and finished by Ptolemy V; while at Dakka, opposite the mouth of the Wadi Allaqi, similar building was carried out, but in reverse order, the inner shrine being built by Ergamenes, the outer hall by Ptolemy IV, and the pronaos by Ptolemy IX, both temples showing additional work by Augustus. Whatever was the exact state of affairs in Lower Nubia, it seems that the frontier of Cush had been advanced northwards, Lower Nubia or part of it perhaps being a kind of buffer state in which contact between Cush and Egypt was friendly in the time of Ptolemy IV. The defacement by Ptolemy V of the cartouches of Ergamenes at Philae indicates a temporary deterioration in the relations between Egypt and Cush, probably not unconnected with a serious rising in Upper Egypt at the end of the reign of Ptolemy IV; and the fact that some Greeks from Cyrene about this time cut their names on a pillar in the temple at Buhen opposite Wadi Halfa indicates a possible temporary occupation of the whole reach by Ptolemaic troops. But inscriptions by Ptolemy VII, Adikhalamani (200-180 B.C.) and Ptolemy VIII in the temple at Debod between Philae and Kalabsha point to a resumption of friendly relations in the northern extremity of Lower Nubia, at that time usually called the *Dodeka-schoinos* or Twelve Furlongs.

Friendly relations with Egypt and perhaps with other parts of the outside world must have been the underlying cause of the greater prosperity of Meroë under Ergamenes and his immediate successors. They also explain the apparent revival in Egyptian culture. At least one Egyptian artist and scribe must have been imported for the decoration of the chapel of the pyramid of Ergamenes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1923 A, pp. 42-3.

But this was the last time that the ancient Egyptian language was used intelligently in Cush. The cursive Meroitic script was presumably invented about this time. It is an alphabetic script in which the so far unidentified Meroitic language is written.<sup>1</sup> The attempt to decorate the chapel of the pyramid of Queen Nahirqa (160-150 a.c.) with Egyptian hieroglyphs was a failure, probably because Meroitic cursive had come into general use by then, causing the knowledge of Egyptian hieroglyphs to be lost.<sup>2</sup> The Meroitic hieroglyphic (picture-writing) script seems to have been invented on the basis partly of the Meroitic cursive script, and partly of Egyptian hieroglyphs. It is to the late Professor F. Ll. Griffith that the determination of the alphabetic nature of the Meroitic scripts and their partial decipherment are due<sup>3</sup>—a considerable achievement in the absence of bi-lingual inscriptions. It is also Griffith's work on the great Meroitic cemetery at Faras, which ranged from late Ptolemaic times until after the fall of Meroë, that has done most to give us the beginning of a corpus of Meroitic pottery, so that it is now possible to assign at least approximate dates to many sites and graves of this period.

The pyramid in which the sixth successor of Ergamenes was buried (Pyramid XX in the North Cemetery) shows a marked decrease in size and pretentiousness, and the three-room type of burial chamber, which had been introduced by Senkamaniskén so that the walls of the third chamber might be inscribed with texts from the Book of the Dead (see p. 118), and which had long not been used for that purpose, was now abandoned.

On the grounds of this apparent sudden impoverishment of the kingdom, and the apparent contemporaneity

<sup>1</sup> Griffith, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> Reisner, 1923 A, p. 69 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Griffith, 1912, 1915, 1917 and 1929.



of the earliest of the later and now more conspicuous group of pyramids at Barkal (Pl. 9a) with Pyramid XX in the North Cemetery at Meroë, Reisner concluded that for some reason or other there had been a second split in the kingdom. Of the five pyramids in the second Barkal group, the first, second, and last were the tombs of queens, and it seemed possible that there had been a quarrel about the succession, a Napatan queen claiming the throne for her infant son and then setting up an independent kingdom when she failed to secure for him the throne of Meroë. But Tanyidamani left inscriptions at both Napata and Meroë, the style of writing of which is considered by Macadam immediately to precede that of Queen Amanirenas and Akinidad. They too and Queen Amanishakhete and Amanikhabale are seen from their monuments to have controlled the north as well as the south; and there seems little if any room for Reisner's Second Independent Kingdom of Napata. The Barkal pyramids may indeed be the tombs of princes and princesses of the Napatan branch of the royal family who did not reign. Monuments of Queen Amanirenas have been found from Dakka to Meroë. One of them is a bronze altar now in the British Museum, which was found in Taharqa's temple at Kawa in the debris of the fire presumably caused by Petronius in 23 B.C., so that possibly she, or more probably Queen Amanishakhete, was the queen with one eye and a masculine appearance who conducted all negotiations with the Roman invaders.<sup>1</sup> During the absence of part of the Roman garrison of Egypt on a campaign in Arabia, the Cushites had raided Philae and Aswan and pulled down the statues of the emperor Augustus. In the resulting punitive expedition, the Roman general Petronius took Pselchis and Premnis

<sup>1</sup> Strabo, *Geography*, xvii, i, 54; Pliny, *Natural History*, vi, xxxv, 4; and Dion Cassius, liv, 5. See also Griffith, 1917, p. 160.



(Kasr Ibrim (Pl. 20) opposite Aniba), two strong points in Lower Nubia, and then razed Napata to the ground, although the queen (called by her title Candace) offered to give back the statues brought from Aswan. The fine bronze head of one of these statues, however, remained in Cush until it was found by Garstang about 40 years ago under the floor of one of the palaces of Meroë (Pl. 17b).<sup>1</sup> After sacking Napata, Petronius fortified Kasr Ibrim, and it presumably became the frontier between Cush and Rome.

If we may judge by the size of her pyramid, there was an increase in the prosperity of Meroë in the time of Queen Amanishakhētē,<sup>2</sup> who seems to have continued to reign after the death of her husband. It must have been the sequence of queens-regent at Meroë at this time, that gave rise to the tradition that Cush (Ethiopia) was always ruled by queens called Candace. Candace is the Meroitic word for 'queen' or 'queen-mother' and was a title and not a name.<sup>3</sup> The renewal of the prosperity of Meroë was presumably due to the reunion of the kingdom.

King Natakamani, the son-in-law and successor of Queen Amanishakhētē, carried out the only considerable reconstruction of the great temple of Amen under Jebel Barkal since its foundation by Piankhy. The inscriptions of the reconstruction were made in his name by an Egyptian scribe. This temple had no doubt been involved in the general destruction of Napata by Petronius, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that Natakamani came to the throne soon afterwards, say between 20 and

<sup>1</sup> It is now in the British Museum. There is a cast of it in the Khartoum Museum. See Garstang, 1912, plates xii-xxi.

<sup>2</sup> It was from her pyramid that Ferlini recovered the treasure which up to 1939 was in the museums of Berlin and Munich. See Budge, 1907, I, pp. 285-320.

<sup>3</sup> See Crowfoot and Griffith, 1911, p. 53; also Macadam, 1949, pp. xii, 101.

15 B.C. His importation of Egyptian craftsmen revived for the last time in Cush the dying Egyptian tradition.<sup>1</sup> He and his queen were great builders, and this Egyptian influence can be seen in some of the temples built by him and his queen Amanitëre and in the reliefs of their pyramid chapels in the Northern Cemetery at Meroë. They were pathetically anxious about the succession, and were represented on their buildings associated with three different crown princes, two of whom died before they did and are probably both buried in the Northern Cemetery. The eldest, Arikankharēr, certainly is: in his tomb was found the oldest representation of a camel in the Sudan.<sup>2</sup>

The first building operations they undertook were on the temple of Amen at Meroë and the Lion Temple (Pl. 16*a*) at Naga, about 24 miles east of the Nile and 80 miles upstream of Meroë. Their work at Meroë was probably only redecoration, but there is no reason to think that they did not build the Lion Temple at Naga, which consists of a pylon with a single chamber behind it. It is decorated with Meroitic designs and Meroitic hieroglyphic inscriptions, which represent the lowest point in the decline from the Egyptian style of Ergamenes. Arikankharēr, presumably their eldest son, but still young, is represented as crown prince. None of the royal triad is given a throne name, and the Meroitic titles of the king and queen are placed inside a cartouche. (Pl. 16*b* and Fig. 21).

Their next work was the restoration of the temples at Napata and particularly the great temple. An ambitious attempt was made to restore the damaged walls of the great temple and to decorate the inner rooms in Egyptian

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1923 A, pp. 67 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A small bronze figurine now in the Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection, no. 1950.

style with Egyptian inscriptions not unworthy of the undamaged parts of the temple of Piankhy. For this work they must have imported at least one Egyptian.

Before any great progress was made with the work at Napata, the crown prince Arikankharēr died, and the Egyptian scribe was employed to design the reliefs on his tomb. The chapel of the pyramid built for his mother Queen Amanitēre was decorated in the same style. Arikankharēr was given the throne name of Ankh-ka-Re<sup>1</sup>, which name was also given to his two successors.

Arikakhatani, presumably his younger brother, now became crown prince, and is represented associated with the king and queen on another temple at Jebel Barkal.

An altar from Wad Bān Naga,<sup>1</sup> the river port of Naga and Musawwarat es Safra, is inscribed with the name of the king and queen in purely Egyptian style. There was once a temple at Wad Bān Naga. Its site is just on the Khartoum side of the railway station; but every stone of it has since been removed.

The Amen temple at Naga was next constructed and decorated in Egyptian design, but with Meroitic hieroglyphs in the inscriptions except in the throne-name and titles. The influence of the Egyptian craftsman is still clear, but the work was no doubt executed by local men who had been taught by the Egyptians according to Egyptian tradition. On the walls of this temple Arikakhatani is the crown prince. He then died and was succeeded by another brother Shērakarēr as crown prince. In his time was built the temple at Amara East, in the same style and with almost the same design.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ? in Berlin Museum: see Budge, 1907, II, pp. 126-7.

<sup>2</sup> Recorded by the German traveller Lepsius, see Lepsius, 1849-59, v, pls. 69-70. Every stone of the temple has disappeared since his time, the masonry of the temple having been broken up and used for building houses in the present village of Amara. Indeed the site of the temple is now difficult to locate. It was just on the east side of the motor track in use in 1948.



Arikakhatani was probably buried under the unfinished pyramid N. LVI at Meroë, which falls archaeologically between the pyramids of Natakamani and Amanitëre. The order of their deaths is not known, but one wonders whether Amanitëre did not survive her husband to rule as queen-mother and whether she may be the 'Candace queen of the Ethiopians' mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles,<sup>1</sup> whose eunuch, who had charge of all her treasure, had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was sitting in his chariot reading the book of the prophet Isaiah on his way home when he was met and converted to Christianity by Philip, and 'went on his way rejoicing'!

The colossal statues that lie before an unexcavated temple site at Haj Zummar on the island of Argo (see p. 154 and Pl. 17a) are probably those of Natakamani.<sup>2</sup> On one of the statues at Argo the king is shown with a young prince, presumably Shērakarēr. It is not unlikely too that this king built at least one of the temples at Musawwarat, (Pl. 18b), but since there are no inscriptions on any of the

buildings, it is impossible to be certain until they have been studied in detail. There is a group of three temples with residences (perhaps for priests) attached to them, surrounded by masonry walls, for the protection either of the temples from raiders or of the temple cattle

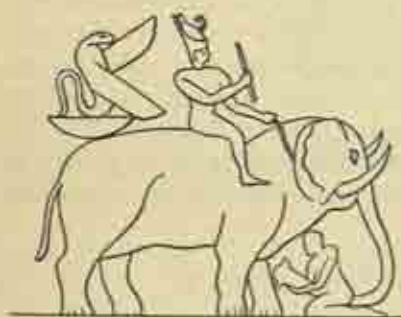


Fig. 20. Meroitic king riding an elephant (after Lepsius). From Naga

from wild beasts (there were lions in this area up to a

<sup>1</sup> viii, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Dunham, 1947 n.



hundred years ago). Near Musawwarat and at Naga there are large artificial reservoirs (*hafir*) for the storage of rainwater, and near the *hafir* at Musawwarat are the remains of several small shrines, from one of which—possibly attributable to Natakamani—Lepsius<sup>1</sup> has recorded some remarkable reliefs including one of a king who wears the crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt riding bareback on an elephant (Fig. 20). In this representation of an elephant being ridden, which is unique in the Nile Valley, and in that of the Meroitic lion god Apedemak with three heads and two pairs of arms<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 21) on the Lion Temple at Naga built by Natakamani (see above, p. 163), it seems reasonable to see the influence of Indians, with whom no doubt Meroë was beginning to come into touch indirectly through the kingdom of Axum, which was much interested in the now important Indian trade.<sup>3</sup> It is probable that the cotton which was identified in fabrics found in the North Cemetery at Meroë was introduced from India,<sup>4</sup> and it is not unlikely that the idea of the artificial reservoir which became so important at this time and the construction of which must have needed much man-power, also came from India, where such reservoirs have long been an important method of storing rainwater.<sup>5</sup>

In any case the undertaking of such large works suggests that water-supply was becoming an increasing

<sup>1</sup> Lepsius, 1849-59, v, pl. 75 a, and Budge, 1907, II, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Lepsius, 1849-59, v, pls. 59-60, and Budge, 1907, II, plate opp. p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> See Schoff, 1912, pp. 64 ff. and Warmington, 1928, *passim* for the influence of India on Axumite architecture. Before A.D. 300 Alexandria had lost to Axum all her very considerable trade with India and the East.

<sup>4</sup> See Massey, 1923, p. 231 and Hutchinson, Silow and Stephens, 1947.

<sup>5</sup> Arkell, 1951 A.

problem. Presumably the pastures had become sadly over-grazed, especially for miles round the capital and wherever there were settlements of people to whom the



Fig. 21. The god Apedemak (after Lepsius). From Naga.

prosperity of the preceding centuries had brought wealth, for wealth in the Sudan means flocks and herds. Over-grazing leads to the destruction of the tree-cover, for the goat prevents the regeneration of trees. With the

loss of the trees, there is no protection for the other vegetation, of which the roots anchor the soil, and erosion sets in. It may be too that the actual rainfall is reduced. Excavation has shown that erosion of ancient settlement sites in the Khartoum area has only been serious since graves were dug in them about A.D. 100.<sup>1</sup> It is in this that is to be seen one of the main causes of the downfall of the great and famous kingdom of Meroë.

The remarkable little sandstone 'kiosk' temple at Naga (Pl. 16a) has not yet been dated. If it is not also one of the works of that great builder Natakamani, although in a style which is strange and undoubtedly shows Roman influence, it must have been built by one of his immediate successors. Roman influence is also to be seen in the crude copy of a Roman bath found near the royal palaces at Meroë.<sup>2</sup> One Latin inscription was cut by a visitor on the wall of a building at Musawwarat.<sup>3</sup> The emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68) sent two centurions to see whether the Sudan was worth conquering and adding to the Roman Empire. They travelled the whole length of the Nile,<sup>4</sup> and, returning to Rome, reported that the country was too poor to be worth the trouble of conquest.

Natakamani was succeeded by his third son Shērakarēr, whom we have met before (p. 164) and whom Reisner dates to A.D. 15-20. After him twenty-one rulers were buried in the North Cemetery at Meroë before the kingdom of Cush tottered to its inglorious end. Less than half

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1949 A, p. 125 and Arkell, 1949 D, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> Protected by a temporary building, it may still be visited. Discovered in 1911-12 (see Garstang, 1913, pp. 77-81 and Garstang, 1914, pp. 15-21), it has not yet been fully published.

<sup>3</sup> See Lepsius, 1849-59, VI, 101, 56. Lepsius removed the inscription and took it to Berlin.

<sup>4</sup> See Wainwright, 1947, p. 22 and *S.N.R.* xxix, 240. From the account of their journey it is not clear whether they reached Roscires or the Sudd.

their names have been recovered from the excavation of their pyramids, which became less and less pretentious and well-equipped. This is the list so far as it is known, with the dates as given by Reisner,<sup>1</sup> though somewhat modified after discussion with Dr Macadam:

Shērakarēr	A.D. 15-20
(Pyramid N. XV)	20-40
Akhyesbēkhe	40-50
Amanitenmemide	50-75
Amanikhatahan (Pyramid N. XVIII)	75-100
(Pyramid N. XL)	100-05
Aritanyesbēkhe	105-30
Teqērideamani I (??) (Pyramid N. XXVIII)	130-50
(Pyramid N. XLI)	150-60
Takizemani (Pyramid N. XXIX)	160-80
(Pyramid N. XXX)	180-200
Tarikenidal (Pyramid N. XIX), Pl. 14b	200-20
(Pyramid N. XXXII)	220-25
(Pyramid N. XXXVII)	225-35
(Pyramid N. XXXVIII)	235-50
Teqērideamani II (Pyramid N. XXXVI)	250-70
(Pyramid N. XXXV)	270
(Pyramid N. LI)	270-90
(Pyramid N. XXIV)	290-30
(Pyramid N. XXVII)	310-30
(Pyramid N. XXVI)	330-40
(Pyramid N. XXV)	340-55

The date of Pyramid N. XXXVI was based on the supposition that the king buried in it was the one mentioned in a demotic inscription at Philae dated A.D. 253. It seems now, however, that such an equation is very improbable. The name in this inscription, the date of

<sup>1</sup> Reisner, 1923 A, p. 76 and p. 157.



which is not in question, resembles Teqērideamani, whose pyramid (N. XXVIII) Reisner dated to A.D. 130-150. Whether there can have been a misinterpretation of the evidence it is not yet possible to say. The solution adopted here is that there was a second Teqērideamani contemporary with the later date.

Hellenistic bronze objects found in the tombs of the time of Natakamani must either have been gifts brought back by embassies sent to Rome or objects that reached Meroë in the course of trade. The absence of similar objects from later graves suggests a further reason for the degeneration which characterizes the final phase of the kingdom, namely that contact with the outside world became less, and without external stimuli to keep it going, culture decayed and the efficiency of the kingdom decreased.

This retrogression to what was to all intents and purposes a 'dark age' in the Sudan was no doubt not unconnected with the state of affairs in Egypt. There the prosperity that the country had known under the first century of Roman rule had been on the wane ever since the latter half of the second century A.D. The tribute of corn that had to be paid in kind to Rome led to the impoverishment of Egypt. Depopulation of villages became general in the third century, and irrigation canals fell into disrepair. The impoverished peasants were forced to resort to brigandage. Under these conditions Christianity began to spread, and first came to notice about A.D. 250, when numbers of Christians refused to offer sacrifice to the emperor Decius, and when an attempt to put an end to the frequent assassination of the emperor was made by laying emphasis on his divinity. The history of the century A.D. 250-350 in Egypt is one of poverty everywhere, riots particularly in Alexandria, and raids by the Blemmyes (Beja) on Upper Egypt. A

desperate situation was temporarily retrieved to some extent by Diocletian (A.D. 284-305) who reformed the currency, and abandoned the Dodeka-schoinos, withdrawing the frontier to Aswan, and inviting the Nobatae (the Napatans? see p. 178) to occupy Lower Nubia as a protection against the Blemmyes, with payment of subsidies to both Nobatae and Blemmyes alike. A revolt of Alexandria led to the siege and sack of that city, and there were considerable disturbances in Egypt due to the persecution of the Christians, now steadily increasing in numbers. Indeed for some centuries the Coptic church dated events from this reign as the beginning of the Era of the Martyrs. Some forty years later Christianity was officially recognized by Constantine the Great (A.D. 323-337), but Egypt continued to be torn by quarrels between church and state. The condition of her cultivators was desperate. In some villages less than an eighth of the taxpayers remained. The alternative to brigandage was now to flee to the desert to become a monk, against which an edict was actually issued.

In the Sudan in the whole of the last phase there is only one record of contact with the outside world, and that is the long demotic inscription at Philae which is alleged to record the visit of an embassy dispatched by a King Teqērideamani to the Romans, presumably on his accession. This embassy is stated to have brought rich gifts to the gods at Philae in the third year of the emperor Trebonianus Gallus (A.D. 253). The last six nameless rulers of Cush were buried in small pyramids of plastered red-brick, and then we have from northern Abyssinia the inscription of 'Ezānā king of Axum, which suggests that Meroë town was sacked and the kingdom destroyed by an army sent by 'Ezānā, who probably used the excuse of some border incident, for which nomads were responsible, to put an end to a trade rival whose increasing

weakness, poverty, and inefficiency had left her at his mercy. The inscription runs:

' . . . I, 'Ezānā, the son of 'Ella 'Amida, a native of Halen, king of Axum and of Himyar and Raydan and of Saba, and of Salhen, and of Seyāmo and of Beja and of Kāsu [Cush = Meroë], king of kings . . . made war upon Nōbā, for the peoples had rebelled and had boasted of it . . . , "They [the Axumites] will not cross the river Takkāzē [the River Atbara]", said the peoples of Nōbā. And they were in the habit of attacking the peoples of Mangurto and Khasā and Bāryā and the blacks and of making war upon the red peoples. Twice and thrice they had broken their solemn oaths, and had killed their neighbours without mercy, and they had stripped our deputies and messengers whom I sent to enquire into their raids, and had stolen their weapons and belongings. And as I had warned them, and they would not listen but refused to cease from their evil deeds and betook themselves to flight, I made war on them . . . and fought with them on the Takkāzē, at the ford of Kemalkē. They fled without making a stand, and I pursued them for 23 days, killing some and capturing others . . . I burnt their towns, both those built of bricks and those built of reeds, and my army carried off their food and copper and iron . . . and destroyed the statues in their temples, their granaries, and cotton trees and cast them into the river Sēdā (Nile). And I came to Kāsū (Cush) and fought a battle and captured prisoners at the junction of the rivers Sēdā and Takkāzē. And the next day I despatched the army Mahazā, and the army Harā, and Damawa and Falha and Serā up the Sēdā to raid the country and the cities built of bricks and of reeds. The cities built of bricks were 'Alwā [Sōba] and Daro<sup>1</sup> . . . and after that I sent the army of Halen and the army of

<sup>1</sup> ? Kadarō north of Khartoum.

Laken down the Sēdā against the four towns of the Nōbā which are made of reeds. . . . The towns built of bricks which the Nōbā had taken were Tabītō and Fertōtī. And my peoples reached the frontier of the Red Nōbā<sup>1</sup> and they returned in safety, having defeated the Nōbā and spoiled them by the might of the Lord of Heaven. And I planted a throne in that country at the place where the rivers Sēdā and Takkāzē join. . . .<sup>2</sup>

It may be significant that Meroë is not mentioned in this inscription, but confirmation of the Axumite occupation is provided by a fragment of a Greek inscription found at Meroë.<sup>3</sup> This blow fell on the kingdom of Meroë from the east, and as we shall see in the next chapter, there is some reason to think that the royal family that had ruled Cush for over a thousand years moved west of the Nile to northern Kordofan and probably thence to northern Darfur.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the Dongola Reach, *i.e.* Napata, see p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Kirwan, 1937, pp. 49-51.

<sup>3</sup> Sayce, 1909, p. 190 and Sayce, 1912, pp. 64-5. The fragment is now in Khartoum Museum, Antiquities Collection no. 308.



## CHAPTER VIII

### Nubia after the Fall of Meroë

(A.D. 350-600)

WHEN the kingdom of Cush came to an end with the fall of Meroë, the ancient name of 'Cush' ceased to be used, except in Kordofan and Darfur. There Nubian-speaking peoples, whose position west of the Nile may be due to the blow which fell on Meroë from Axum in the east, betray their early connection with Cush by their retention of names which mean 'people of Cush' (Kash or Kaj), e.g. the Kagiddi (or Shelkōta) of southern Jebel Meidob, the Kaja of northern Kordofan, and the Kajjar or Birgid of central Darfur. The Kagiddi have a tradition of having come from the east under the leadership of a queen who is buried in a large mound grave near Jebel Kabeiya at the south-east corner of Jebel Meidob. Excavation of that grave may one day produce archaeological proof of their connection with Meroë. In the meantime a graffito in Greek characters and the Old Nubian language from Awadun in northern Kordofan<sup>1</sup> shows that the name 'Cush' was still in use there in the Christian period (see pp. 181 ff.); and this suggests that the royal family of Meroë had taken refuge in the western part of their domains. The Ptolemaic 'pilgrim bottles', in which scented oils were probably imported, found at Abu Sofyan near a possible red-brick pyramid reminiscent of the last royal pyramids of Meroë<sup>2</sup>, and the red-brick

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1951 B.

<sup>2</sup> Newbold, 1924, p. 78 and pl. xii. Some of these pilgrim bottles are in the Khartoum Museum; see also Shaw, 1936 B.



of Meroë; but that country had probably been visited from time to time since the days of Harkhuf (p. 42) by Egyptian traders, one or more of whom may have set themselves up as local rulers; and there are brands connected with its earliest traditional sultans, the Daju, that still survive in Dar Sila and that can only be explained as having been originally Egyptian hieroglyphs.<sup>1</sup> Then there is in the royal palace at Uri (p. 201) one building that is constructed of brick-like stone masonry such as that employed in the late royal palace at Meroë uncovered by Garstang's excavations and an imposing platform of audience with an ascent of nine steps (Pl. 246)<sup>2</sup> which may well be a rough copy of the platform on which the Meroitic king gave audience near his palace. There are also unusual brands used by the Tungur, the Kaitinga who are connected with the Tungur, and some of the Zaghawa in northern Darfur, which bear a remarkable similarity to royal property-marks used at Meroë.<sup>3</sup> The name of the legendary Tungur sultan Show Dorshid also is inexplicable unless it is derived from Shu or Show the sun god of Egypt, who occasionally is given the attribute *neb-er-djer shed* 'lord without limit, deliverer', and with whom the king of Meroë was sometimes equated in complimentary fashion. Indeed there are so many parallels between the institutions of the divine kingdom of Darfur and those of the divine kingdom of Cush (Meroë)<sup>4</sup> that it seems probable that they are due to the foundation of a kingdom in Darfur by the exiled royal family of Meroë after the fall of that city. It is indeed possible that the

<sup>1</sup> We also saw, p. 107, that Darfur slaves from Trk and Irm were in particular favour in Ancient Egypt.

<sup>2</sup> Arkell, 1946 II, p. 189 and pl. vi.

<sup>3</sup> To be published by Dows Dunham. Cp. MacMichael, 1922, I, pp. 58 and 79.

<sup>4</sup> See Arkell, 1951 II, c. 7.

Tumagera (see p. 200), who founded several kingdoms in the country west of Darfur and from whom the historic Tungur kingdom is descended, were the scions of the Meroitic royal family, and that it is to their influence if not to their blood that is due the rise of other divine kingdoms along the great east-west road across Africa between the desert and the forest, such for instance as that of the Jukun in northern Nigeria.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest occurrence of the name Nubia or Nuba is in the Greek writer Eratosthenes c. 200 B.C.,<sup>2</sup> who mentions the Nubai as being on the west of the Nile 'as far as the bends of the river'. This should mean as far as the Dongola Reach, which is the present approximate distribution of the Nubian-speaking peoples. Curiously enough the present northern limit of these people is approximately the same as that of the C group (p. 46), but though they both belonged to the Brown race there is no evidence that the Nubians are descended from the C Group. The name of the Nuba apparently comes, like so many other tribal names in the Sudan (Berti, Berta, Burgu, etc.), from a word in their own language which means 'slaves'; and it is not impossible that the ancient Egyptian word *nub* for 'gold' arose from the fact that this metal came to them first from their southern neighbours whom they looked on as slaves. If this is the case, the name Nubia may go back to the beginning of the historic period, and in that case some of the Nubians may indeed be descendants of the C Group.<sup>3</sup>

The name Nuba to-day usually implies an inhabitant of the Nuba Mountains, a group of hills in southern Kordofan inhabited by remnants of peoples of varying

<sup>1</sup> See Meek, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Strabo xvii, i, 2.

<sup>3</sup> In any case Meroitic, the written language which replaced Ancient Egyptian at Meroë, was not Nubian, whatever it was.



language and race, the majority of whom are now negroid. The Nuba Mountains were probably first so-called after Brown race Nubian-speaking immigrants from the steppe country further north, from which they were displaced by nomad Arabs about the fourteenth century. The name 'Kordofan' for this steppe country probably comes from a Nubian word *kurta* meaning 'men'.

After Eratosthenes, the Nuba (Nubei) are mentioned by Pliny<sup>1</sup> as being found eight days north of the island of the Sembridae (unlocated) with a city called Tenupsis on the Nile (? Pnubs on Argo Island, see p. 154), and by Ptolemy<sup>2</sup> c. A.D. 150 as being found on the west bank and islands of the Nile. The association with the west bank seems to indicate Kordofan as their homeland as well as the Wadi Halfa district and Lower Nubia, Kordofan meeting the Nile near Debba on the Dongola Reach near the great bend in the Nile, where the Wadi el Milk runs into the Nile from the south-west.

In the third century A.D. we hear of a people called Nubades or Nobatae, who have hitherto usually been taken to be the same people as the Nuba or Nubians. But whether they are the same people or have a different origin is uncertain, and in the present state of our ignorance an open mind should be kept on the matter. It does, however, seem possible that the name Nobatae may have nothing in origin to do with Nuba, but may perhaps have come from Napata.<sup>3</sup> When we first meet the Nobatae they appear confined to Lower Nubia, where according to the Byzantine historian Procopius (c. A.D. 545) they were introduced by the Roman emperor Diocletian (A.D. 284-305)<sup>4</sup> in order to keep the raiding Blemmyes

<sup>1</sup> *Nat. Hist.* vi, xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> *Geography*, iv, 748-83.

<sup>3</sup> Called Nabata in Pliny *Nat. Hist.*, vi, xxxv.

<sup>4</sup> For a coin of Diocletian struck at Alexandria and found at El Obeid the capital of Kordofan, see Arkell, 1933.

(now Beja) from molesting the frontier which he had withdrawn to the First Cataract. Procopius, who was writing about 250 years after the event, says that the Nobatae came from Oasis, which presumably means Kharga Oasis. There is however no evidence that the Nobatae ever inhabited the western oases,<sup>1</sup> and if they were encouraged to settle in Lower Nubia to protect Egypt from the Blemmyes, they do not seem to have fulfilled expectations; for in the latter half of the reign of Theodosius II (A.D. 408-50) Philae was attacked by the Blemmyes and Nobatae, while in A.D. 436 Kharga was raided by people called Mazices, probably Tuareg (who call themselves Imoshagh).

In A.D. 453 the Roman general Maximinus made a punitive expedition against the Blemmyes and Nobatae and inflicted a severe defeat on them, compelling them to make peace for one hundred years, to release all Roman captives, to pay compensation for damage done, and to surrender hostages. On their side the Blemmyes and Nobatae obtained leave to visit the temple of Isis at Philae, and at stated times to borrow her statue and to take it to their own country to consult it (a strange condition for a Christian Roman to include in the terms, showing that the old religion could still be recognized for motives of policy).

Soon afterwards Maximinus died, and the Blemmyes and Nobatae at once disregarded their agreement, invading Upper Egypt and recovering the hostages they had given. They were, however, attacked by Florus the

<sup>1</sup> De Villard, 1938, p. 28 takes it that they did come from the west and were Berbers, and he suggests that they may have been the same people as the Nababes of Pliny v, i, 21, mentioned under Mauretania. If there were such a definite Berber element among the people of Nubia, it would account for the name Barabra by which they are still known in Egypt.

prefect of Alexandria and compelled to make peace again.

Christianity had been the recognized state religion of the Roman Empire since the accession of Constantine the Great (A.D. 313-37); and Abyssinia had been converted to Christianity c. A.D. 350 by Frumentius in the reign of 'Ezānā of Axum' (see p. 171). We have seen that 'Ezānā, whose kingdom of Axum thrived on the trade which came to the Roman world from central Africa and India, made an expedition to the Nile and caused the overthrow either of the kingdom of Meroë or of the negroid Nuba from southern Kordofan who were overrunning the Gezira at that time. In Cosmas Indicopleustes we get a glimpse of the Axumites obtaining gold nuggets from the Berta of Beni Shangul by silent barter in return for cattle and bars of salt and iron.<sup>1</sup> The far-seeing Roman emperor Justinian (A.D. 527-65), engaged in a struggle with Persia, endeavoured to obtain the help of Christian Axum in opening direct communication by sea with India, but the Axumites could not be persuaded to venture further than the Persian Gulf, where the Persians continued to buy up all cargoes as they arrived from India. Justinian's envoy Julian has, however, left an account of the barbaric splendour of the court of Axum, where the king was naked but for headdress and loincloth of linen embroidered with gold, and stood in a four-wheeled chariot drawn by four elephants.<sup>2</sup>

In A.D. 545 Procopius<sup>3</sup> informs us that the Nobatae and Blemmyes were still being paid a subsidy by the Romans

<sup>1</sup> Jones and Monroe, 1935, pp. 26-9.

<sup>2</sup> McCrindle, 1897, pp. 52-4; Wainwright, 1942 and Arkell, 1944.

<sup>3</sup> Jones and Monroe, 1935, pp. 32-3. See also Schoff, 1912, p. 64. The famous obelisks of Axum are architectural evidence of the mixed influence of Egypt and India that prevailed at Axum.

<sup>4</sup> *De bello Persico*, I, 20.



in order that they should keep the peace, in accordance with the hundred years treaty. But on the termination of that treaty Justinian sent Narses the Persarmenian to destroy the temple of Isis at Philae, imprison the priests, and remove the statues to Constantinople. He had also set about converting the Nobatae to Christianity, probably with the idea that as Christians they would keep the peace with Christian Rome when the treaty came to an end. But even at this early date the Christian church was divided into rival sects, and when the emperor despatched an Orthodox missionary to the Nobatae, the Monophysites persuaded Queen Theodora to despatch another missionary representing their sect; and the race was won by the Monophysite Julian, who in A.D. 543 succeeded in converting the king of the Nobatae to a Christianity that was at least nominal.

A royal cemetery, no doubt that of the Nobatae before their conversion to Christianity, has been excavated at Ballana between Abu Simbel and Adindan near the present northern boundary of the Sudan.<sup>1</sup> The excavator thinks that this was a Blemmye cemetery, but there is no evidence that those nomads from the eastern desert, who did control part of Lower Nubia for a short time, achieved such a lengthy permanent occupation as this cemetery and other X Group cemeteries must represent. The tombs at Ballana and Qustul were not those of Christians, for young women, grooms and other slaves had been sacrificed to accompany the deceased, and in some of the royal graves the queen herself had been sacrificed as well. The predominant cultural strain in the X group, particularly the pottery, is Meroitic. Over the doorway to the burial chamber in one of the royal tombs was a purely Egyptian winged disk; and on the silver crowns, encrusted with masses of semi-precious stones in Byzantine

<sup>1</sup> See Emery and Kirwan, 1938, and Emery, 1948.



style, were the ram's head and plumes of Amen, uraei sometimes winged, eyes of Horus, and embossed busts of Isis, etc., wearing the *atef* crown (Fig. 22). Just such



Fig. 22. The crown from the grave of an X Group king at Ballana

crowns had no doubt been buried with the kings and queens of Cush at Meroë, to judge from representations on the walls of temples and their pyramid chapels, but none of them escaped the robbers' clutches as at Ballana. Silver bowls, dishes, flagons, etc., and bronze standard and hanging lamps, vessels, etc., and inlaid wooden chests found in the graves are mostly products of Byzantine Egypt dating from the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., and suggest that trade with Egypt was comparatively unrestricted. That this trade did not stop in Nubia, but travelled *via* the central Sudan to West Africa is

indicated by the discovery of native copies of the bronze lamps of this period in the Gold Coast (see Fig. 23).<sup>1</sup> Some of the bronze objects display Christian influence in their decoration, the cross being used prominently more than once.

Mound graves of the X Group period, some of them excavated, have been found at various places between

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1950 B.

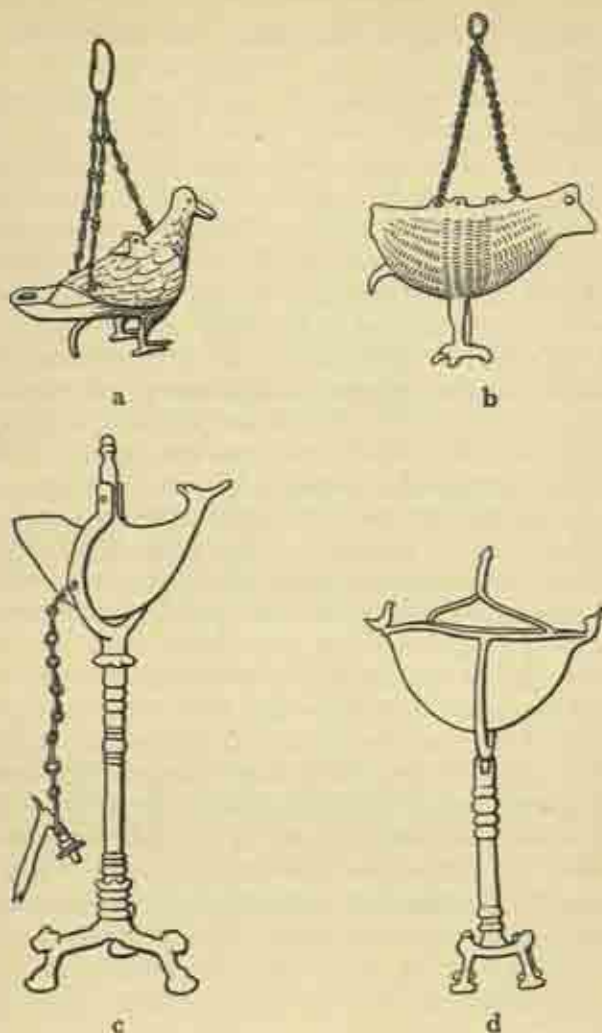


Fig. 23. Two Byzantine lamps from Egypt found at Firka (a, c) and two copies from an old grave in the Gold Coast (b, d).  
 Scale approx. 1:5

the First and Fourth Cataracts;<sup>1</sup> and there are many mound graves on the west bank in the Khartoum area which probably date from the same period and belong to an allied culture.

The move of the capital from Ballana to neighbouring Faras may have been a result of the conversion of the kings of the Nobatae to Christianity. Silko, who left an inscription in bad Greek on the wall of the temple at Kalabsha<sup>2</sup> (ancient Talmis) (Pl. 196), was perhaps one of the first Christian kings of the Nobatae. But it may have been only because the scribe that he employed was a Christian that he appears to attribute to the Christian God his victory over the Blemmyes, whom he apparently expelled from the Nile Valley between Shellal (Telêlis) and Kasr Ibrim. He describes himself as 'king of the Nobatae and of all the Ethiopians', thereby apparently claiming to be a successor to the kings of Meroë. In addition to his successes against the Blemmyes he records a victorious expedition against 'the Upper Nobatae'. Who these Upper Nobatae were is not clear, but there are two groups of mound graves in Napata, which (see p. 178) is probably to be regarded as the homeland of the Nobatae. One is on the right bank of the Nile at Zuma and the other on the left bank at Tangâsi. The size of these mounds makes it highly probable that they are both royal cemeteries, and in them it is probable that the ancestors and contemporaries of the Nobatae of Ballana are buried, and that they were the Upper Nobatae mentioned by Silko in his inscription. Though they have some negro blood in them, the present day inhabitants of the Dongola Reach are not as black as their compatriots

<sup>1</sup> For those excavated see Reisner, 1910, pp. 149, 201, and 207; Firth, 1912, p. 88 (Gerf Hussein) and p. 201 (Ikkur); Bates and Dunham, 1927, p. 117; Kirwan, 1939; and Reisner, 1917, p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Gauthier, 1911-27.

from the Shendi-Khartoum area, and it is probable that they were the Red Nōbā (see p. 173) whose frontier was reached by the Axumite troops of 'Ezānā after the defeat of the Black Nōbā between Sōba and the mouth of the River Atbara. The connection of the name Nobatae with Napata is not however certain, and it may be that the Third Cataract formed the southern boundary of Nobatia<sup>1</sup> when, as we have seen, there were three Christian kingdoms, Nobatia (between the First and Third Cataracts, with its capital probably first at Ballana and later at Bukharas (modern Faras)),<sup>2</sup> Alodia (with its capital at Sōba near Khartoum and northern frontier possibly near Kabushiya and possibly near the Sixth Cataract), and Mukurra or Makuria (between Nobatia and Alodia, with its capital at Old Dongola). The name Mukurra may be derived from the Berber root *mgr* meaning 'great one' or 'chief', see p. 200.

Nobatia as we have seen was converted to Monophysite Christianity by Julian in or about A.D. 543. In A.D. 569 Mukurra was converted to Orthodox Christianity.<sup>3</sup> In the same year Longinus, disciple of the exiled patriarch Theodosius, disguised his baldness with a wig, left Constantinople for Nubia, and not only confirmed the work of Julian in Nobatia, but after a difficult journey with the help of the king of the Blemmyes, reached and converted the Alodaci to the Monophysite faith, although the king of Mukurra, probably instigated by the Orthodox priests at his court, did his utmost to prevent him.

<sup>1</sup> Kirwan, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Griffith, 1925, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> John of Biclarum, quoted by Kirwan, 1934, p. 202.

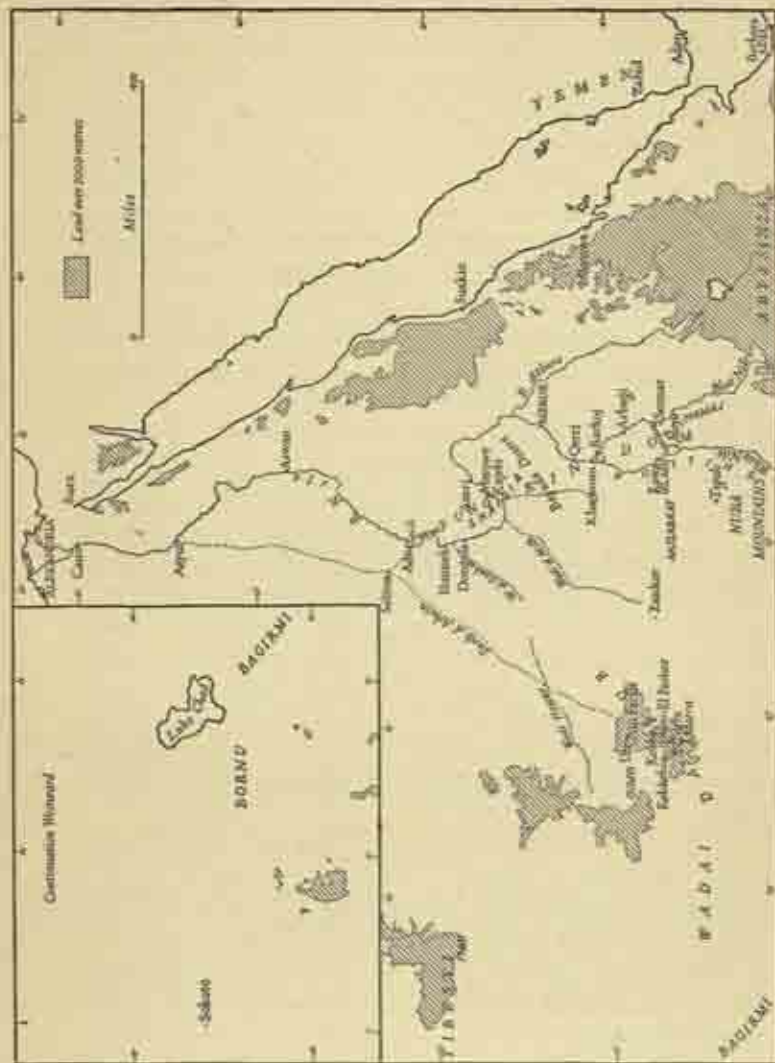


## CHAPTER IX

### The Coming of Islam (A.D. 600-1500)

DURING the reign of Heraclius the Romans abandoned Egypt, and in A.D. 616 the Persian army entered the Delta. Their rule in Egypt however only lasted ten years, for the revolt of the Arabs, under the inspiration of the teaching of the Prophet Mohamed, deprived the king of Persia of his best soldiers, and gave the Romans the opportunity of recovering both Syria and Egypt. The Arabs however soon threatened Egypt, and by 640 it had been occupied by Amr ibn al Asi. Both Nubia and Abyssinia were cut off from the Christian empire of Rome by the Arab occupation of Egypt. Abyssinia's isolation was intensified by the Arabs seizing control of the ports of Massawa and Adūlis (Zeila); and it was not until early in the tenth century that Abyssinia reconquered these ports and imposed tribute on them, although they still remained in Moslem hands.

In Nubia it is possible that the two kingdoms of Nobatia and Mukurra united in the face of the common danger of an Arab invasion. Abdallah ibn Saad the governor of Egypt invaded Nubia in 641-2, and as a result the Nubians paid a tribute of slaves for several years. Abdallah then made a second expedition in consequence of frequent raids on Egypt from the south, and seems to have found the whole country from Aswan to Alwa (Sōba) under one ruler. After bombarding the capital [Old] Dongola with catapults, he made a treaty with the king, who is described as 'the chief of the Nubians . . . from the frontier of Aswan to the frontier of Alwa'. The treaty also states that 'no Moslem shall be bound to repulse an enemy from



Map 9. The Nile Valley and the Lake Chad area, A.D. 600-1500

you or to attack him or hinder him from Alwa to Aswan'.<sup>1</sup>

By the terms of this treaty, which remained in force for over 600 years, a tribute of 360 slaves together with a present of 40 more was paid yearly near Aswan; and at the same time a perhaps more valuable gift of wheat, barley, lentils, cloth and horses was handed over by the Arabs to the Nubians.

In 750 the Ommayad dynasty was supplanted by the Abbasids. Some Beni Ommaya refugees at this time crossed the Red Sea direct to the Sudan; but there is no evidence to support the late Fung tradition that the kings of Sennar are descended from a scion of the family of Marwan the last Ommayad khalifa.

Numerous religious controversies followed the overthrow of the Ommayad khalifate. Apart from the main schism between Sunni and Shia, at Baghdad the Hanifite doctrines were prevalent, while those of the Imam Malik ibn Anas held the field in Egypt and North Africa in the latter part of the eighth and ninth centuries, and were especially patronized by the rival Ommayad dynasty established in Spain. But early in the ninth century the teaching of the Imam el Shafa'i acquired the predominance in Egypt which it still maintains, a predominance which has never extended to the Sudan or seriously rivalled the doctrines of Malik there or further west.

In 831 a treaty was concluded between the Beja chief Kanun ibn Abd el Aziz and the Arabs, by which the Beja between Aswan and Dahlak who had been raiding Egypt agreed to pay the khalifa a tribute of a hundred camels or three hundred dinars a year. The Beja were only to visit Egypt unarmed and not to damage the mosques erected in their country.

<sup>1</sup> Maqrizi, Kirwan, 1935, p. 61. For the full terms of the treaty see MacMichael, 1922, I, pp. 157-8.

The Nubian tribute was also now in arrear, so the Arabs cut off supplies of food, which they used to send to the Nubians, and encouraged the Beja to raid them. In this predicament Zakaria, king of Nubia, sent his son George to appeal to Baghdad, and as a result George was given a large order on the treasury in Egypt to be paid as soon as the tribute was handed over; and it was agreed that in future the Nubian tribute need only be paid every three years, the Arab gift being at the same time scaled down.

In 854 the Beja again refused to pay tribute and raided Edfu and Esna; but an expedition was sent against them and they were defeated, their chief Ali Baba surrendering. By the ensuing treaty the Arabs obtained permission to work mines in Beja country. As a result ever-increasing numbers of Arabs, particularly Rabi'a and Guhayna, settled among the Beja and married their women; raids on the southern border of Egypt ceased, and tribal control of the Beja was acquired by an Arab aristocracy. There are four Arabic tombstones inscribed with Cufic characters from Er Rih (Airi) on the Red Sea, which date from 997 to 1036 and may now be seen in the Khartoum Museum. A Christian tombstone from Sōba dated 897 (? now in Berlin) is also known.

About 940 el Masudi visited Egypt, and recorded that Nubia was divided into Mukurra in the north and Alwa in the south. The northern part of Mukurra, previously known as Nobatia, was now known as Maris,<sup>1</sup> which is Coptic for 'south', and shows that it was looked on as part of Egypt. Alwa was tributary to Dongola, the king of which was responsible for the tribute to Egypt.

Masudi states that beyond Alwa was a great tribe of blacks called Kunna, whose name may survive in that of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *marisa*, the drink of Maris or Nubia.



Jebel Kōn of Kordofan or of the Jukun in Nigeria (see p. 177), but who may possibly represent Ghana in west Africa. Masūdī says of them that they are naked like the Zing, and that their land produces gold, and in it the Nile divides—possibly an allusion to the Niger, which at this period was considered to be part of the Nile.

In 951 there was a Nubian raid on Kharga; and in 956 another on Aswan; but the resulting punitive expedition captured Kasr Ibrim (Pl. 20).

About the end of the tenth century King George II of Nubia received a request from the king of Abyssinia that he should use his influence with the patriarch of Alexandria to induce him to resume the despatch to Abyssinia of a properly ordained *abuna*, to the absence of whom the king attributed all the troubles that were then assailing his land. A queen (? of the Agau) was ravaging the country, burning the churches and enslaving the people. It is said that King George's mediation was successful and that a new *abuna*<sup>1</sup> was sent, and the pagan queen subdued; but Islam now began to encroach on the empire of Abyssinia from the direction of Somaliland.

About 985 Ibn Selim wrote an account of 'Nubia, Mukurra, Alwa, Beja and the Nile'. In the extreme north of Nubia Moslem settlers from Egypt had acquired lands and were practically independent. Between them and the Second Cataract were a number of Moslem Nubians, recently converted. In northern Nubia the chief towns were Ibrīm (Pl. 20; the ancient Primis), Begerash (the modern Faras) and Du in Sai Island<sup>2</sup> (Pl. 23*b*). In it

<sup>1</sup> In the 12th century an unsuccessful attempt was made to secure the election of an Abyssinian *abuna*, and from that date he has always been an Egyptian, ignorant alike of the languages of the Abyssinian sacred books (Ge'ez) and of his flock (Amharic).

<sup>2</sup> The part of Sai Island which contains the ancient fortified town is still known as Adu, see Arkell, 1946 A, p. 88.

the representative of the king of Nubia was known as Lord of the Mountain,<sup>1</sup> and was responsible for seeing that no unauthorized person passed the Second Cataract. South of the area controlled by the Lord of the Mountain money was unknown, and trade was carried on by bartering slaves, cattle, camels, iron and corn for imports from the north.

The northernmost district of Alwa was known as el Abwāb 'the Gates'.<sup>2</sup> The hereditary king of Alwa was then Simeon. He was richer than the king of Mukurra, and had more soldiers and more horses. Ibn Selim says that he was independent, which suggests that Masudi's statement that Alwa was tributary to Dongola may be incorrect. In his capital (Sōba) there were fine buildings, churches decorated with gold and beautified with gardens, and a special suburb set apart for Moslems. In the churches of Alwa they used Greek books which they translated into Nubian; and like Abyssinia their bishops were sent to them from Alexandria. The chief grain of the country was white millet (*dura*).

To the south of Alwa lived the Kersa, possibly the same people as Masudi's Kunna, and perhaps the people of Darfur (Fur=Kura) or of Wadai.<sup>3</sup> Of the Kersa it is

<sup>1</sup> The origin of this title should be the object of future research. It may be more than a coincidence that it has the same meaning as the name Tumagera, the people who founded so many divine kingdoms in the western Sudan including that of the Tungur in Darfur, who have a tradition that they came from the Nile. If this is the case, there may well be a connection between the names Tumagera and Mukurra, the Christian kingdom of Dongola; see pp. 185 and 201.

<sup>2</sup> El Abwāb has not been located for certain. MacMichael thinks that it was the vicinity of Kabushiya near ancient Meroë, while Monneret de Villard, 1938, p. 153, places it near the junction of the River Athara and the Nile. See also Crowfoot, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Carhou, 1912, I, 249, says the Tibu call the Māba (Burgu) of Wadai Kursa.

said that they get the local spirits to reap the harvest for them.<sup>1</sup>

There is in the Khartoum Museum the tombstone of Bishop Jesus of Sai with a Coptic inscription which probably dates from the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup>

In 1171 the Fatimite (Berber) dynasty in Egypt was replaced by the sultanate of the Ayyubite Kurds under Saladin (d. 1193). He sent two expeditions to the Sudan because a Nubian movement in support of the Fatimites had led to an attack on Aswan. The second expedition in 1172-3 was led by Saladin's brother Turan Shah, who took Ibrim (Pl. 20), pillaged the church, captured many prisoners and much cotton, tortured the bishop and killed seven hundred pigs.<sup>3</sup> An ambassador sent by him to Dongola came back and reported that the country was a poor one, growing only a little millet (*dura*) and a few dates. The king had ridden bare-back on a horse out of his palace, the only building in Dongola not constructed of grass. He did not understand Arabic and had laughed when the ambassador had spoken to him in that language.

In a description of Nubia written early in the thirteenth century Abu Salih the Armenian depicts the ruler of Maris, who then lived at Faras, as wearing a turban, two horns and a golden bracelet (Fig. 24).<sup>4</sup>

In 1250 the Mamlukes replaced the Ayyubites as rulers of Egypt, repressing a revolt of the Arabs in Upper Egypt;

<sup>1</sup> ? cf. the *damzog* of Darfur, for which see Tunisi, 1845, pp. 149 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Budge, 1907, I, 465.

<sup>3</sup> Evetts and Butler, 1895, p. 149 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Compare the picture of the king of Nohatia in the little church at Abd el gadir near Wadi Halfa, for which see Fig. 24 taken from Griffith, 1928, pl. xxxii. The horns were of course descended from the horns of Amen whose headdress was worn by the kings of Meroë. The golden bracelet was a royal decoration, a memory of which survives in the surname of a well-known Dongola family, Suar el dahab.



Fig. 24. The ruler of Nobatia wearing a horned head-dress.  
From Abd el gadir



and in 1259 Baghdad was sacked by the Mongols, causing a considerable number of distinguished Arabs to become displaced persons, some of whom no doubt found new homes in the Sudan. It was a disturbed time in the history of the Near East. The Christian kingdom of Dongola, which seems never to have been strong enough to be effective outside the Nile Valley, must at this time have felt Moslem powers closing in upon it. As early as c. 1240 the great king Dunama of Kanem claimed to control all the trade routes between Kanem and Duwy (Du = modern Adu on Sai Island).<sup>1</sup> A ruined stone enclosure at Lagiya in the Wadi el Gaab about 20 miles west of modern Dongola (el Urdi), which has both the great main door and a small entrance at the opposite side for the women (Pl. 24a) in the fashion typical of Kanem, Bornu, and the royal palace in Darfur<sup>2</sup>, is archaeological evidence for the occupation of this oasis by a western power, Kanem or Darfur, probably about this time. In 1275-6 the governor of Kus invaded Nubia as far as Dongola, because King David had failed to pay his tribute and had allowed Egyptian territory near Aswan and Aidhab to be raided.

It is probable that most of the Christian ruins in the Northern Province date from the years between 1250 and 1340 when the Christian kingdom of Dongola was actively on the defensive. Some are in great rectangular stone forts with round towers on the walls, of which the design is clearly inspired by contemporary European practice, and for which architects must have been found who had experience of work under the Crusaders in Palestine and Syria. Examples of these may be seen at Sai (Adu), Khandag, Bakhit and Merowe East, though all these constructions are falling rapidly into utter ruin,

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1946 A, p. 88 and above p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> See Arkell, 1952.

and of the red-brick church, which each fort contained, nothing is now left but a strew of brick fragments and a few sherds of painted pottery. A few tiny mud-brick churches perched on almost inaccessible heights, in some of which are traces of mural paintings and graffiti in Nubian, survive, though in ruin, and they are in a rather better state of preservation on small rocky islands in the river, as for example near Sarraṣ, at Atiri near Semna (Pl. 21*b*), and in the Fourth Cataract area.

The description given to Alvarez (p. 203) in Abyssinia, c. 1525 by the Syrian who had been to Nubia, seems to apply to Dongola more than a century after the Moslem conquest rather than to the southern kingdom of Alwa: 'there are in it a hundred and fifty churches which still contain crucifixes and effigies of Our Lady, and other effigies painted on the walls, and all old; and the people of the country are neither Christians, Moors [= Moslem] nor Jews; and they live in desire to become Christians. These churches are all in old ancient castles which are throughout the country; and as many castles there are, so many churches . . . as many castles as there are, so many captains; they have no king, but only captains'.

Attacked from Egypt, King David retreated; according to Ibn Khaldun he fled as far as El Abwab, but was sent by the ruler of that district as a prisoner to Baybars who kept him in prison till he died. Next year a larger army accompanied by David's nephew Shekenda came and defeated the Nubians, sacking the fortified town of Du on Sai Island (Pl. 23*b*), and destroying a number of Nubian churches. The Lord of the Mountain (see p. 191) swore allegiance to Shekenda, who was crowned king, the northern part of Nubia (the old Dodeka-schoinos) becoming once more a fief of the ruler of Egypt. Shekenda was murdered in 1277 on the death of Baybars, and one

Berek became king, but he was put to death by the Mamlukes, and Shemamun made king.

In the History of Qalaun, an Arabic manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Nationale<sup>1</sup> in Paris, it is said that c. 1286 ambassadors arrived in Egypt from Ador, ruler of El Abwab, to complain against the king of Dongola for detaining a messenger sent from Egypt to Ador. Ambassadors also came from Dongola; so Qalaun sent one *amir* to visit Ador, and the princelets of Bara, Taka (? Kassala), Kaderu (? Kadaro north of Khartoum), D\*fo *دشو* اری (? Uri in Darfur), \*fal *فل*, Anaj (? Northern Kordofan) and Kersa (? Wadai, see p. 191). He also sent another ambassador to Shemamun; and on their reports he despatched an army against Dongola the following year. Shemamun ordered the Lord of the Mountain, who was governor of Mikhailnarti near Wadi Halfa and of Sai, to withdraw before them. Eventually the Nubians stood at Dongola and were defeated; Shemamun fled and Shemamun's nephew was made king. On their departure Shemamun returned and ejected his nephew; and in 1289 a stronger Moslem army arrived. Shemamun fled again, this time to the court of Ador, and the Moslems set up another king in Dongola; and again on their return to Egypt, Shemamun came back and established himself in Dongola for the third time, promising Qalaun to pay the tribute and make no further trouble. Soon after Qalaun's death however Shemamun gave trouble again, and a lesser chief (*mek*) called Any revolted; and an expedition was sent against them both, Any fleeing to the stronghold of the Anaj, perhaps in northern Kordofan, and Boudemma being made king of Dongola instead of Shemamun. Afram the leader of the expedition travelled thirty-three marches south beyond Dongola to

<sup>1</sup> Fonds arabes no. 1704, pp. 291-2. See also Quatremère, 1811, ii, pp. 109, 112.



meet the ruler of El Abwab, but he did not appear, sending a message to say that he had been pursuing Any and mentioning that the Anaj country had recently been invaded by an alien prince from the west (? from Kanem or Darfur), but that he was trying to eject the intruders, and that in fact 'the Moslem forces had brought fear and consternation to all tribes of the land of the blacks. For they had penetrated districts where no army had ever been before, unless it were that of Alexander the Great'.

Who or where these Anaj were, to whose stronghold apparently west of the Nile *mek* Any fled, must be the subject of further research. The name Anaj, besides being claimed by a few of the inhabitants of the Sixth Cataract area, is now only commonly heard among the Arabs of northern Kordofan, who use it as the equivalent of Abu Qanaan<sup>1</sup> for any pre-Arab inhabitants of the country. Thus it may now be applied to ancient Egyptian, Meroitic or Christian ruins. It seems probable that it derives from the Tuareg expression *kel anag* 'the people of the east', and that it was used first in Kordofan by Tuareg introduced in the time of the kingdom of Meroë to look after the new transport animal, the camel, for which the steppes of Kordofan provide such suitable grazing. *Kel anag* to such Tuareg camel-owners would have meant the Meroitic inhabitants of the Nile valley; and by the thirteenth century it may have been applied to some princelet descended from the Meroitic royal family, such as the Tungur ruler in northern Darfur (see p. 201).

On his return to Egypt Afram left a guard of infantry with Boudemma and a large supply of corn. In 1304-5

<sup>1</sup> Abu Qanaan presumably means Berbers, who trace descent from Qanaan, Canaan. But it is noteworthy that in the Old Testament we find Anakim in Canaan, and although we do not know when the Tuareg passed from Palestine through Egypt into north Africa, their traditions imply that they must have done so.



King Amai of Nubia brought a present of slaves, camels, oxen, rock-salt and emeralds to Cairo, and sought help from the sultan which was given. Seven years later tribute was paid by Kerenbes, the last Christian king of Dongola, but in 1315 troops were sent to Dongola (Pl. 22), Kerenbes removed to Cairo, and Abdallah ibn Sanbu, a Moslem, made king.

At this stage Kanz el Dowla, the chief of the Kunuz round Aswan, attempted to seize the throne of Nubia, attacking Abdallah and putting him to death. The sultan then sent Abraam, brother of Kerenbes, against Kanz el Dowla, but he only lived a short time and Kanz el Dowla re-established himself till 1323, when Kerenbes was reinstated by a Moslem army. On the departure of the army however Kanz el Dowla again seized the throne.

The Christian kingdom of Dongola had by this time ceased to exist. The tribute had been abolished when a Moslem became king. In 1366 the southern frontier of Egypt was ravaged by the Kenuz and Ikrima Arabs, and the king of Nubia was murdered by his nephew with the help of some Ikrima. The loyalists however were holding out at Du in Sai Island with the dead king's brother, while the pretender, having treacherously murdered by fire his Ikrima supporters, was preparing to attack Du from Dongola with another force of Arabs. The sultan sent a force to reinstate the legitimate king and repress the Kenuz and Ikrima; but it is to be noted that the king's brother was installed at Du and not at Dongola. What happened to him is not known. In 1397 a king called Nasr el din, presumably a Moslem, was ousted by a relative and fled to Cairo for help. At this time the Beni Kanz and Hawara and other Berber tribes were rapidly amalgamating with the riverain Nubians from Dongola northwards, Islam supplanting Christianity. The power of the Mamluke government so far up the river was

negligible, and conditions in Egypt were such as to encourage the nomad tribes to depart to districts where they were not subjected to any alien power. Thus hordes of Arabs, mostly Guhayna, were pouring into the Sudan and over-running it as far as Abyssinia and Darfur and even beyond. Indeed very many of the camel-owning nomads of the Sudan arrived at this time.

In the east Ibn Batuta (1302-77) mentions an encampment of Awlad Kahil, the ancestors of the Kawahla (presumably the name means 'black' (Arabs) from *kohl*) as encamped between Aidhab and Suakin and mingled with the Beja and understanding their language.

Although trade was no doubt maintained directly or indirectly between Darfur and the Nile Valley, there is no reason for thinking that the kingdoms of either Dongola or Alwa were strong enough to have had any political influence west of the Nile. In fact there is no archaeological evidence of the cultural influence of Christian Nubia further west than in the Wadi Mugaddam some 20 miles west of Omdurman, and there that influence probably spread up the Wadi from the Dongola Reach and not directly from the Nile.

By 1386 however the nomad Arabs who had been pouring into the Sudan from Egypt for nearly a century had reached the Lake Chad area in sufficient numbers for some of them to join with Tibu in helping the Bulāla, a cadet branch of the ruling family of Kanem, or Bornu as it was now known, to expel the reigning dynasty from the capital, Njimi. In 1391-2, indeed, the Mamluke sultan of Cairo received a letter from the king of Bornu complaining that the Arab tribes of Gudham and others had pillaged all the lands of Bornu and were selling the people to merchants from Egypt, Syria and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Qalqashandi, *Sobh el Asha*, viii, p. 116, Cairo, 1913-18.

It seems too that it was Arabs who brought to an end the rule of the Zaghawa Mira over northern Darfur.<sup>1</sup>

The name Zaghawa is an arabicized form of a Tuareg word meaning 'the red people', and a form of it still means 'the people of Bornu' in that language. In Bornu history the reds are the Berbers as opposed to the blacks. The Zaghawa are mentioned as early as the ninth century by Ya'qūbi<sup>2</sup> in connection with Kanem; and al Muhallabi in the tenth century describes them as a divine kingdom stretching between Lake Chad and the borders of Nubia. The Zaghawa seem thus originally to have included both Kanem and Darfur. By the fourteenth century<sup>3</sup> Zaghawa is spoken of as a separate state between Kanem and Nubia, and in 1945 the *melik* of Dar Tuar in Dar Zaghawa (northern Darfur) still claimed descent from Mohamed of Bornu. Since Kanem at the height of its power in the thirteenth century controlled trade routes with the Nile as far as Sai in Nubia, it must have established its dominion over northern Darfur; though no doubt it lost that hold towards the end of the fourteenth century as a result of domestic trouble and disturbances caused by the coming of the Arabs.

It is probable that the name Tuar mentioned above is derived through 'Tumāri', as in Kanuri, from Tumagera the royal family of Tibesti, whose name contains the Berber root *mgr* for 'chief' or 'great one' and means 'the great ones of Tu', an earlier name for Tibesti (meaning 'the mountain'). Indeed the name is equivalent to that of Sahib el Jebel, Lord of the Mountain, used in the kingdom of Dongola (see p. 191). The chiefs of Kavar

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1952, pp. 271-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Kitab al buldan*, p. 345.

<sup>3</sup> See Abu al Fida (d. A.D. 1332), *Taqwim al buldan*, p. 158, Ibn Khaldun (d. A.D. 1405), *Histoire des Berbères* (ed. de Slane) and Maqrizi, *Al Khitat*.



and of Munio and Mandara in Bornu, were also Tumagera. This name in Darfur became arabicized as Tungur, although the earlier form of the name can still be traced in that of their eponymous ancestor Ahmed el Ma'gūr ('the hamstrung'). The Tungur are usually known as Tungur Kirāti, which must be connected with (a) the expression Tumagera من اجل كرا 'of the people of Kira' used in the Bornu history of the Imam Ahmed, (b) the Zaghawa word *kiri* for 'sultan' and so (c) probably with the Meroitic word *qere* for 'king'.<sup>1</sup> It is probable although not certain that these Tumagera represent the branch of the Meroitic royal family which seems to have moved westward after the fall of Meroë and given rise to a string of divine kingdoms across Africa (see p. 177). It is quite possible that the rulers of the Zaghawa of northern Darfur before the coming of the Arabs were Tumagera. It is also possible that there is a connection between the names Tumagera and Mukurra (see p. 191 n), the Christian kingdom of Dongola that replaced the kingdom of Meroë, but retained some of its ceremonial such as the headdress with the horns of Amen (Fig. 24). Not enough is yet known on this point, but future research should disclose whether the connection only dates from the time of the Christian kingdom of Dongola, as is suggested by the traditions recorded by Barth and Carbou that the Tungur once came from Dongola or lived on the Nile, or whether it goes back to the fall of Meroë.

The Tungur kingdom of Darfur is not mentioned by medieval Arab writers, but the arabicized form of its name suggests that in its present form its date is subsequent to the coming of the Arabs in the fourteenth century. The probable date of the beads from Uri and the siting of that large walled city (Pl. 24b) and other related hill

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1951 D, pp. 207 ff.



towns of well-built stone masonry so as to control all routes through the country that passed south of the Zaghawa plains and north of the impassable massif of Jebel Marra in central Darfur suggest that the Tungur kingdom reached its prime towards the end of the fifteenth or early in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1952, ch. 10.

## CHAPTER X

### The Era of the Firearm (A.D. 1500-1700)

THE end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century saw a number of upheavals in the Near East and North Africa, the chief single cause of which was the invention of the firearm. Though not yet the weapon of precision that it was to become, the possession of only small numbers of firearms now rendered a prince invincible in the eyes of one who possessed none of them.

In 1453 the Roman empire came to an end when Constantinople (Istambul) fell to the Turks. By 1487 the Portuguese were trying to find an all-sea route from Portugal to India, and for this purpose they sent an expedition under Bartholomew Diaz which travelled along the west coast of Africa and round the Cape. Ten years later Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape again and reached India.

In 1517 the Turk Selim I became the ruler of Egypt. This Turkish conquest of Egypt infused new spirit into the war of Islam against the infidels, and completely changed the political situation on the Red Sea. It also supplied firearms to the various Moslem princes on the Gulf of Aden and the Persian Gulf. In the hope of securing an ally against these Moslem princes who interfered with Portuguese trade, an embassy was sent by Portugal to Abyssinia. This embassy took a few matchlocks to that country, and spent six years there from 1520-27, being eventually allowed to return home; and its chaplain Alvarez has left the only extant account of medieval Abyssinia before its glories were destroyed by Moslem and Galla invasions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stanley of Alderley, 1881.

Abyssinia was divided into various provinces, one of which, Bahr-medr, stretched in the direction of Suakin. Alvarez did not visit western Abyssinia, but he heard of the existence of Christian Nubia north-west of Abyssinia; and his account is of particular interest to the Sudan because it records how, during the stay of the Portuguese embassy, the Nubians sent to the king of Abyssinia and begged him to send them priests, because they were cut off from Egypt whence they had been accustomed to get their bishops. But the king of Abyssinia refused, asking how he could supply priests, when he had to get his own *abuna* from Egypt. This was the last that was heard of Christian Nubia outside the Sudan. The next time the Sudan appeared in external history the Turk Selim I, invading the northern Sudan along the Nile, was surprised to find that it was held by Moslems known as the Fung, who were strong enough to fight a bloody battle with his forces at Hannek near the Third Cataract, and to prevent his further advance. Hannek is near the southern boundary of the Mahas country; and a frontier at this point gave Selim control over the west bank desert trade-route between Egypt and the Sudan<sup>1</sup>. To examine the question who these Fung were will take us far into the western Sudan, and before we do so (p. 208), it will be better to relate the little that is known of the history of Abyssinia that affects the Sudan at this period.

Both Abyssinians and Portuguese were vaguely aware of the new danger from the Moslems, but before they did anything, indeed the year after the Portuguese embassy left Massawa, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, surnamed Gran 'the left-handed', leader of the armies of Adel, a state on the Gulf of Aden of which the territory included Berbera, attacked and with a small body of disciplined matchlock-men, shattered the armies of Abyssinia and

<sup>1</sup> Crawford, 1951, p. 141.





overran it. Abyssinia managed to get an appeal through to Portugal in 1535; and, although communications had grown more difficult, the Turks in 1538 having occupied Yemen and put strong garrisons into all sea-board towns, including Aden, while controlling the Red Sea with a powerful fleet, the Portuguese in 1541 in the course of a raid on Suez succeeded in landing four hundred men at Massawa under Christopher, son of Vasco da Gama. Before these Portuguese troops could join up with the Abyssinian army they had to fight two indecisive battles with Ahmed Gran, who then obtained nine hundred matchlock-men from the pasha of Zabid in Yemen, and with their help attacked and defeated the Portuguese, killing Christopher da Gama. Ahmed then sent home the Zabid Turks and withdrew to his headquarters; but the few surviving Portuguese re-armed themselves from a depôt and made fresh gunpowder, and with the aid of a large Abyssinian force surprised Ahmed Gran, defeating and killing him and all but forty of his two hundred Turks. Thus the Abyssinian king reconquered his kingdom, but the Turks succeeded in occupying Massawa, and so finally cut Abyssinia off from all outside assistance.

Away in the west the upstart Bulâla (see p. 199) were expelled from Bornu about 1500, and according to a Bornu tradition one of their princes, Osman Kâde, went to Makâda (the modern Sudan name for the Moslem parts of Abyssinia) where he ruled till he was replaced by the Turks. There is nothing however in the history of Abyssinia about a prince from the west founding a kingdom which was replaced after a long history by the rule of the Turks, and the explanation seems to be that in the tradition the name 'Makâda' has been mis-used for Sennar, just as in the Sudan to-day the term 'Fellâta' is sometimes mistakenly applied to Wadai, when it strictly denotes some of the inhabitants of Nigeria only.



Fig. 25. A matchlock-man

This Bornu tradition probably indicates the correct solution of the problem of the origin of the Fung kings who reigned at their capital of Sennar on the Blue Nile for three centuries before they were replaced, as we shall see at the end of the next chapter, by the Turkish government of Ismail Pasha. Indeed at the beginning of the 'Fung Chronicle' Amāra Dunkas, the first Fung sultan, is encamped at Jebel Moya some twenty miles west of Sennar before he makes that place his capital.

According to modern Fung tradition Amāra Dunkas was descended from a Beni Ommaya refugee (see p. 188), but this cannot be accepted in the light of their widespread name of 'the black sultans' (*sultana zerga*)<sup>1</sup>. Also in the account given by the Jewish adventurer David Reubeni of his visit to Sennar in 1522, King Amāra is described as a black whose 'rule extends over black people and white', the white people being presumably the Arabs whom the Fung ruled through the 'Abdallab viceroy. Bulāla refugees, Moslems of long standing, with a tradition of ruling, are just the sort of people the early Fung seem to have been, and may well have arrived on the White Nile, as four hundred years later Mohamed Bello Mai Wurno from Sokoto (beyond Bornu) came and settled on the Blue Nile near Sennar. They must have found the White Nile inhabited by Shilluk, and settling first at El Ais (modern Kawa), acquired dominion over the Shilluk, and then over the old Nubian kingdom of Alwa which was crumbling into decay as a result of the severance of communication with Egypt after the fall of Dongola and the consequent overrunning of the northern and central Sudan by the Arabs. The 'Abdallab champions of the Arabs were beaten in battle at Arbāgi in the Gezira; without such a defeat, Arabs would never have agreed to serve as viceroys of black sultans. The

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1945 A.

name 'Fung' is probably a corruption of the Shilluk word for 'stranger', which has become Funy in Shilluk country to-day when applied to the people who used to inhabit ancient sites on which is found pottery that is apparently in the tradition of Meroë.<sup>1</sup> The name 'Hamaj', which was given by the Fung to their negroid subjects south of Sennar, was no doubt brought with them from the Lake Chad area, where it is still used for the Kanembu.<sup>2</sup> The word may be an Arab corruption of *amghî* (pl. *inghad*) the Berber (Tuareg) word for 'serf'.

It is impossible to reconstruct any history of the past of the southern Sudan, but surface finds on ancient sites suggest that there were settlements along the White Nile of people who made combed red pottery possibly as early as Neolithic times (see Chapter II), and later of people whose fine burnished pottery decorated with incised and colour-filled patterns with bird and plant motifs probably dates from one of the flourishing periods of the kingdom of Cush.<sup>3</sup> The similarity between modern Shilluk pottery and pots found at Zankor in western Kordofan<sup>4</sup> suggests that it is of western origin, but whether it dates from the rise of the Fung or from the kingdom of Meroë is a problem which still awaits solution by archaeology. The Shilluk are Nilotes who have a tradition of having come from the region of the great lakes in the south where they still have relatives, but Shilluk institutions and their organized divine kingdom may derive from contact with the divine kingdom of Cush, long before the arrival of the Fung.

Little is known of the early reigns of the Fung kings who ruled at Sennar with their 'Abdallab viceroys at

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1946 A.

<sup>2</sup> Carbou, 1912, I, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Penn, 1931, pp. 183-4. See also p. 137.

<sup>4</sup> See Crawford, 1931, pp. 159-60.



Qerri east of Jebel Rowiyan at the upstream end of the Sixth Cataract. In the 'Fung Chronicle' it is stated that after the establishment of the Fung kingdom, the immigration of Arabs increased considerably. The following are the dates of the first Fung kings as given by Bruce<sup>1</sup> and the Fung Chronicle:

Amāra Dunkas	1504-34
Nail	1534-51
Abd el gadir, son of Amāra	1551-58
Amāra Abu Sekakīn, son of Nail	1558-69
Dakin, son of Nail	1569-86
A great administrator, who organised the kingdom and perhaps made a treaty of friendship with the king of Abyssinia.	
Tabl	1586-92
Unsa	1592-1604
Abd el gadir	1604-6
Deposed and went to Abyssinia.	
Adlan	1606-11
Defeated the 'Abdallab at Karkōj on the Blue Nile near Khartoum.	

In Adlan's reign there flourished in the Fung kingdom a number of famous holy men including Sheikh Idris Mohamed Ahmed, Sheikh Hasan Hasūna el Andalusi, Tāj el din el Bahāri and others.<sup>2</sup> Tāj el din el Bahāri founded the long line of Ya'qubab holy men, a study of whose institutions imitated from the Fung court, under whose favour they grew up and flourished, shows that, while the Fung took over the horned headdress of Christian Nubia (the *tājia ummi gerrin*, see Fig. 26), they brought

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, 1790, vi, 376. The dates are those adopted in Crawford, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> For their history see the *Tahqat Wad Deifullah*, abbreviated in MacMichael, 1922, ii, 93.

with them the western idea of a stool (*kukur*, see Fig. 27), by being seated on which at his accession the new ruler became imbued with the spirit of his predecessor<sup>1</sup>.

About the same time as Islam was spreading in the Gezira under the Fung, the earliest red-brick mosques of



Fig. 26. The horned cap worn by the Ya'qubab

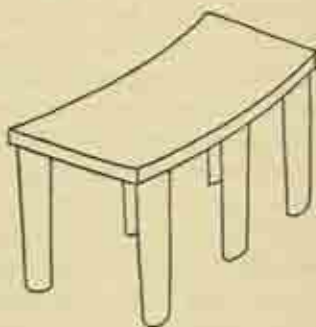


Fig. 27. The *kukur* stool of the Ya'qubab

which the ruins still survive at Ain Farah<sup>2</sup> in northern Darfur were being built, probably by the king of Bornu Idris Alōma (1571-1603). His predecessor Mohamed Idris (1526-45) had brought the kingdom of Bornu to the highest pitch of its greatness, after waging 'war on the opposite borders of his extensive empire at immense distances from each other.'<sup>3</sup> It was presumably he

<sup>1</sup> See Arkell, 1932, p. 228 and plates v and vi and Arkell, 1946 A, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> MacMichael, 1920, pp. 26-7 and Arkell, 1936, pp. 301 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Palmer, 1928, ii, pp. 35, 38.

who brought the Tungur kingdom in Darfur (p. 201) to an end about 1535. We seem to have a memory of Dala (Abdallah) Afni, the famous slave governor of the eastern province of Bornu under King Mohamed Idris<sup>1</sup>, in the Darfur traditions about the eunuch Dāli who quarrelled with the king of Uri and ruled it after the king's departure, and who later organized the administration of Darfur on Bornu lines from his centre at Turra at the north end of Jebel Marra. The two small red-brick mosques at Ain Farah, with the larger house of the king and another building known traditionally as the house of the king's mother, perched up on a hill above the only running stream in northern Darfur in which fish are still found, are situated in just such a beauty spot as would have been chosen by that unique lover of natural beauty, Idris Alōma, who was carefully brought up by an exceptional mother, with an eye to his future on the throne, and who was the first of the rulers of Bornu to build mosques in red-brick there. A sixteenth century musket-ball found in the ruins is a reminder that Idris Alōma won many battles with the help of his musketeers, and 'ruled over Bagirmi, Mandara, the Tibu, Kirsala and Kayala'<sup>2</sup>. While Kirsala may indicate Wadai (see p. 191), Kayala may indicate Darfur, the land of the Kaitinga (see p. 176), who are in origin Goraan Gaida or Tibu taking their name from the Kayi ancestors of the Bulāla and other tribes. All the traces of Bornu institutions found in Darfur—the name of the palace (*el fasher*) and its pair of doors, the great front door and the small back door for women (see Pl. 24a), the title of princess (*meiram*), and the spheres and titles of the four original viceroys (*dīma, uma, etc.*)<sup>3</sup>—indicate that Darfur must have been part

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1952, ch. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Palmer, 1928, iii, p. 162. See also Arkell, 1951 D, ch. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Arkell, 1952, ch. 8.

of the empire of Bornu at some time, and there is no period when it is more likely to have been a province of that empire than the latter half of the sixteenth century. As often happened with mushroom empires in medieval Africa, the empire of Idris Alōma broke up on his death in 1603; and this is the most probable date for the foundation of the historic Keira dynasty in Darfur. The name of this dynasty probably derives ultimately from the Meroitic *qēre* 'king', which, as we have seen on p. 201, is probably embodied in Kirāti, the name of the medieval Tungur kingdom. It is probable that Kuru, who founded this Keira dynasty, had some Tungur blood in his veins, since the Keira dynasty claimed descent from the same ancestors as the Tungur, but at least he cannot have been a member of the Tungur royal family, for under the Keira there was a subordinate sultan of the Tungur, who wore the black *litham* and claimed to be in mourning for the time when the Tungur ruled Darfur. There is a stone-built ruin near Jebel Forei in Turra at the north end of the Marra mountains which is traditionally attributed to Kuru<sup>1</sup>, and some nine miles north-east of it is another ruin, now called Dulo Kuri, which tradition says belonged to Tunsam who fought a civil war with Suliman Solong, son of Kuru, and was eventually defeated and driven out of Darfur to Kordofan, he and his followers from the date of his expulsion being known as the Musaba'āt (debased Arabic for 'those who [went] east'; see also p. 221).

There is the ruin of a fortified stone residence on Jebel Nāmi in Turra that is traditionally the palace of Suliman Solong (c. 1640-70) and of his son Sultan Musa (c. 1670-82).<sup>2</sup> Owing to the absence of written records little is known about the reigns of these early Fur sultans. The first historic mention of the name 'Fur' occurs in 1664

<sup>1</sup> Arkell, 1937, A, pp. 94 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Arkell, 1937, A, pp. 96 ff.



in the account by J. M. Vansleb, a Dutchman, of a visit to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> 'Fur' apparently (like 'Sudan') means 'blacks', and was the name given by the early light-coloured (? Berber) sultans of Darfur to the original negroid inhabitants of the country (such as the Binga, Banda, etc.), who agreed to become Moslem and submit to the sultan's rule, the alternative being to be attacked and either killed or enslaved. The pits such as those near the palace of Sultan Kuru on Jebel Forei<sup>2</sup> are those in which the captives were kept before being traded to North Africa. As the historic dynasty became more and more negroid from intermarriage with black wives and concubines, the appearance of the sultans darkened correspondingly and they became known by the appellation of their black subjects, 'Fur'.

After Sultan Musa each sultan had his *fasher* in a different place, until Sultan Abd el rahman el Rashid (1787-1802) chose a site on the lake Tendelti, which he found when out hunting, and which is now in the middle of El Fasher town. El Fasher is both the political and commercial capital of Darfur, but before the political capital was fixed at El Fasher, the commercial capital was Kobbe some miles to the north-west, now waterless. Kobbe was more or less at the southern end of the Forty Days overland road from Darfur to Egypt, the Derib el Arba'in,<sup>3</sup> which struck the Nile in Egypt near Asyut, and which had probably been in use sporadically since the days of Harkhuf (p. 42).

Sultan Musa was succeeded by his son Sultan Ahmed Bukr (c. 1682-1722). He tried to spread Islam, only the religion of the court circles since the time of Suliman Solong, throughout Darfur by introducing religious

<sup>1</sup> Petermann, (1862-3), p. 42; Paulus, 1792-1803.

<sup>2</sup> Arkell, 1937 A, pl. v opp. p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw, 1929, p. 61.

teachers and building mosques and schools. He also secured the western frontier of Darfur by conquering the Gimr, who had resisted his predecessor, and by defeating Arūs, sultan of Wadai, who had invaded Darfur, in a battle at Kebkebia in the pass to the west through the hills. (*Kebi kebia* means 'they threw away their shields' in Fur). To secure this victory he had to spend two years in training an adequate army and equipping it with firearms which he obtained from Egypt.

At Sennar King Adlan was succeeded by Bādi Sid el qōm son of Abd el gadir (1611-16). The Fung kings were now probably at the height of their power, the 'Abdallab having been humbled and weakened by their recent defeat at Karkoj.<sup>1</sup> Badi now picked a quarrel with Abyssinia. His father Abd el gadir after being deposed had become a vassal of Abyssinia, probably hoping thereby to recover his throne. When therefore Badi received from Susenyos, king of Abyssinia, a gold bracelet and a gilded chair, gifts indicating that Badi was regarded as his vassal, the latter sent him a pair of old and lame horses. The war that followed in 1618-19 consisted in a number of border forays and one battle, in which the Abyssinians came off somewhat the best. Badi died young—actually before this battle—and was succeeded by his son Rubāt (1616-45). The latter was succeeded by his son Badi the Bearded (Abu Dign) (1645-80). During his reign the Shaigia of Dongola revolted successfully. This revolt was the first serious crack in the Fung empire, and one that was never repaired. The origin of the Shaigia has yet to be elucidated. They told Werne that they were indigenous, but disclaimed any connection with either their Nubian serfs or the Arabs. It seems not improbable that they are descendants of the old ruling class on which the strength of the kingdom of Cush depended in the great days of

<sup>1</sup> Crawford, 1951, p. 181.

Napata and Meroë. The territory that they now made independent stretched from the sub-cataract of Deiga to the Fourth Cataract. In this area there were centres such as Kajebi, Merowe East and Amri, ruled by petty kings or *meks*, who lived in crenellated stone-built castles. The chief features of these castles were towers from which firearms could be used with effect on attackers.<sup>1</sup> The Shaigia were renowned for their hospitality, their schools of learning, and especially for their predatory habits. They were indeed famous horsemen, and their strength lay in their mobility. As a result of their revolt the Fung were cut off from Dongola, the chief source of supply of remounts for their army, and the crossing of the Bayuda Desert became very dangerous for caravans between Egypt and Sennar.

Badi made an expedition against the little kingdom of Tegale<sup>2</sup> at the north-east corner of the Nuba Mountains, and forced it to pay tribute, after securing his line of communications across the White Nile, which was still inhabited by Shilluk. He brought back a number of prisoners from the Nuba Mountains, and settled them in villages around Sennar according to the hills from which they had been taken. These villages provided the Fung king with a standing body of Nuba troops down to the end of the kingdom.

Badi was succeeded by his nephew Unsa, son of Nasir, (1680-92), of whose reign nothing is known except that in 1684 there was a bad famine.

<sup>1</sup> See Crawford, 1951, pp. 193-5 and plates 13b, 15-17.

<sup>2</sup> For the history of Tegale see Elles, 1935.

## The Decline of the Monarchies

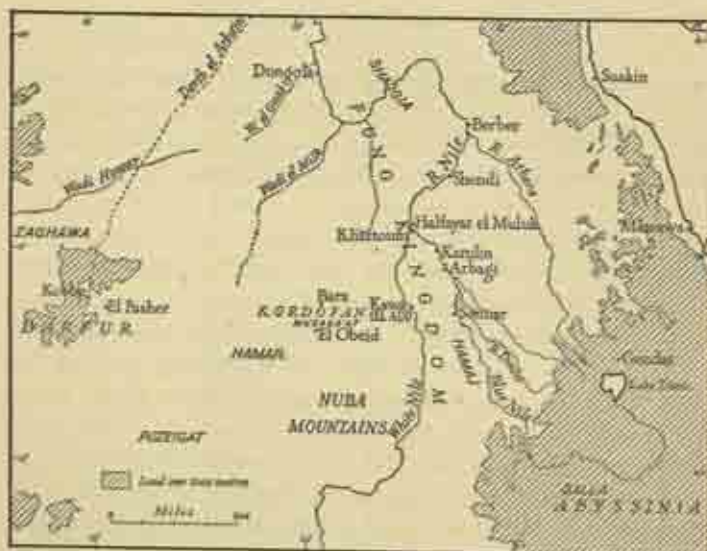
(A.D. 1700-1821)

It is remarkable that the eighteenth century saw a similar decline in each of the three monarchies which, stretching in a line from east to west, had covered since medieval times the whole of the area known for the last fifty years as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. The decline was both in the quality of the monarchs and in the prosperity of their dominions. The cause was partly inherent in the nature of absolute monarchy and partly xenophobia, which caused these kingdoms to shut themselves off from all external influences, with the result that, being out of the main stream of the world's progress, they stagnated and sank into degeneration.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Jesuits made several attempts with varying success to win Abyssinia over to the church of Rome. Their most successful missionary was Paez, a Spaniard, who first settled at Diu in India and there made friends with a Turk, the *agha* of the pasha of Suakin. With his help Paez entered Abyssinia *via* Massawa. He started by founding a school for the sons of the Portuguese and of the Abyssinian nobles, and succeeded in converting the king, for whom he built a two-storeyed palace on Lake Tsana. Paez' successor, Mendez, was however so tactless in pressing reforms on the Abyssinian church, that he caused revolts, which happened to coincide with Galla incursions. It was inevitable therefore that Mendez should fall out of favour, and he fled to the Bahr-negas, who was in rebellion. The Bahr-negas however sold him to the pasha of Suakin. After this the Roman church tried



to send French missionaries instead of Spaniards, but in 1648 the king of Abyssinia made an arrangement with his hereditary enemies, the Turkish pashas of Suakin and Massawa, that any priest who tried to land there should be executed—to such an extent had the Jesuits embittered the Abyssinians already naturally suspicious of foreigners. In the reign of King Jesus I (1680-1704) the Jesuits,



Map 11. The Sudan, A.D. 1700-1821

anxious to recover their lost prestige, made two attempts to establish diplomatic relations between the courts of Abyssinia and Louis XIV of France. Both these attempts shed a little light on the history of Sennar at the time. The French consul in Cairo was instructed to send a suitable envoy, and since an agent of the king of Abyssinia was in Cairo looking for a doctor to cure the king of a skin

complaint, a druggist called Poncet was sent with the king's agent, and a Jesuit accompanied Poncet in the guise of his servant. They travelled safely to Abyssinia *via* Sennar, and Poncet cured the king at the new capital, Gondar. Poncet returned by sea with a Moslem Armenian called Murad, who was sent by the king of Abyssinia as his envoy. Murad took with him some gifts including a few slaves and a young elephant; but by various misadventures all the gifts were lost; and when Poncet and Murad at last reached the French court with only the decaying ears of the elephant, they were discredited on the report of the consul in Cairo, whose enmity Poncet had aroused.<sup>1</sup> The French government then (1704) made a second attempt by despatching Du Roule, the French vice-consul at Damietta, who was an ambitious young man, but ignorant of the countries he was to visit and with all the Gallic contempt for everything that was not French. He was the victim all the way of intrigues stirred up probably partly by Christian opponents of the Jesuits, and also by Moslems and Copts in Egypt. Du Roule managed to reach Sennar, where the king received him kindly and the king's wives showed great curiosity about the white-skinned stranger. To them Du Roule displayed the presents which he was taking to the king of Abyssinia, chief of which was an injudiciously chosen set of distorting mirrors. These convinced the people of Sennar that Du Roule was a magician. He was prevented from leaving the town and eventually murdered in the street (November, 1705).<sup>2</sup> While detained at Sennar Du Roule

<sup>1</sup> See Poncet, 1709. He was in Sennar in 1699 and mentions Halfaya, Kamlin and Arbagi.

<sup>2</sup> There is reason to think that Du Roule had secret instructions to persuade Abyssinia to purchase French war materials and admit European technicians in view of an imaginary threat of attack by Sennar. So that there may have been more justification for the murder than is apparent at first sight; see Crawford, 1951, pp. 234 ff.

had sent his interpreter on to the king of Abyssinia; and the latter sent a letter to the king of Sennar protesting against his detention of Du Roule and of his own envoy, Murad, and threatening to divert the Blue Nile if the king of Sennar would not respect the law of nations and be more neighbourly.

During the lengthy reign of Jesus II (1729-53) the Solomonian dynasty of Abyssinia fell into final decline. King Jesus wasted much of his revenue in re-building the palace on a magnificent scale with imported Greek craftsmen; and the discontent which his reign caused enabled the nobles to gain power at the expense of the monarchy. In the end, incensed by lampoons in which he was called Jesus the Little, and by imaginary histories, which recorded his glorious expeditions—to the houses of his Greek favourites, he led his army to conquer Sennar. The year 1744 is remarkable because in it for the first time the histories of the three kingdoms, Abyssinia, Sennar and Darfur, whose institutions still had so much in common, due to a common inheritance from the pagan kingdom of Cush, coincided in one incident, the Abyssinian attack on Sennar. For it was largely due to the generalship of an exile Fur prince who was in command of a body of Fur troops in the Fung army, that the Abyssinians were utterly defeated. They appeared on the east bank of the Blue Nile within sight of Sennar, but held up by the Blue Nile, they were made to retreat across the river Dinder and were then attacked. The Fung captured much booty, firearms, artillery, tents and horses; and, as the Fung Chronicle relates, the fame of the victory spread through the world of Islam, and embassies came to Sennar from the Hejaz and India, and people came from Egypt and Morocco and settled there.

The identity of the Fur prince is uncertain. He is called Khamis ('Hamis, prince of Dar Fowr') by Bruce,



but he was possibly Abiad<sup>1</sup> son of Sultan Ahmed Bukr (see p. 214), who with his brother had fled to Sennar on the accession of Omar 'the Donkey', son of Mohamed Dowra, to the throne of Darfur. On the death of Ahmed Bukr in 1722 the Darfur monarchy had fallen into a decline. Mohamed Dowra (1722-32) was cruel and unpopular, and almost lost a civil war against his own son. Omar Leil 'the Donkey' (1732-39) was also cruel and bad-tempered, and his military ambitions tired and finally alienated most of his subjects, and in the end he was deserted by most of his army when invading Wadai, and he died there in captivity.

Abulgāsim, another son of Sultan Ahmed Bukr, (1739-52) was unpopular because of his favouritism and preference for slaves in important offices. He tried to revenge his brother Omar by attacking Wadai, but he too, was defeated and believed killed. His brother Mohamed Teirab, son of Ahmed Bukr (1752-87), was then appointed, and when Abulgāsim reappeared having recovered from a wound, the elders would not let Teirab resign. Teirab's mother was a Zaghawa woman, and he appointed many Zaghawa to high posts. He made several expeditions against the Rizeigat Arabs in the south-east, and against the Musaba'āt (see p. 213) in the east, and eventually died in Kordofan on a campaign in which he had reached the Nile in the vicinity of Shendi (the name of which is probably derived from the Fur word for a date palm, *senda*).

Both the Fung and the Fur had claimed to control Kordofan,<sup>2</sup> but in actual fact the Musaba'āt were so firmly established, that neither can be said to have been supreme, although each extorted whatever they could from the Musaba'āt. After defeating the Abyssinian invasion,

<sup>1</sup> Nachtigal, 1889, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> See MacMichael, 1912, pp. 8-11.



King Badi Abu Shelukh engaged in a war with the Musaba'ât about 1747, perhaps at the instigation of his Fur general Khamis (? Abiad), and perhaps in search of remounts for his cavalry, being cut off from Dongola, the old source, by the Shaigia revolt.<sup>1</sup> The Fung were twice repulsed, and then in 1748 the Hamaj Mohamed Abu el Kaylak, who had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Fung army owing to prowess in the campaign, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Musaba'ât and was appointed governor of Kordofan. He ruled it justly and well. But Badi's long reign (1724-62) saw the final collapse of the Fung monarchy. This had begun three reigns earlier. Badi the Red (1692-1716) was the first Fung king against whom a section of the people revolted. It was in his reign that Poncet and Du Roule visited Sennar. His son Unsa (1715-18) was deposed by the Fung of Lulu<sup>2</sup> for immorality. He was the last of the direct line, and was succeeded by Nul (1718-1723), a relative on his mother's side, who was chosen for his good sense and orthodoxy. Badi Abu Shelukh, son of Nul, however, alienated many of his subjects and especially the nobles, for he changed many of the laws and established customs and appointed Nuba chiefs in place of the old nobility. The Fung Chronicle also says he connived at robbery and murder, and allowed his sons to follow his example. A number of the Fung nobles who were with Abu el Kaylak in Kordofan and discontented with Badi's treatment of their relatives during their absence, persuaded Abu el Kaylak to depose Badi. They crossed the White Nile and, encamping at El Ais (Kawa) c. 1761, sent for Badi's son, Nasir, and arranged to make him king in his father's stead. A few years later (1769) Mohamed Abu el Kaylak deposed Nasir, and slew him when he tried to

<sup>1</sup> Crawford, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Not yet located; but see Hillebron, 1933, p. 57 n.

recover his kingdom by force. The supreme power had indeed passed from the Fung king to his Hamaj vizier. Nasir was succeeded by Ismail, but the real power remained with Abu el Kaylak, who spent most of his time in Kordofan, while his brother Adlan as his lieutenant resided near Sennar. Abu el Kaylak died in 1772, but before his death much of Kordofan had been recovered by Hashim,<sup>1</sup> the sultan of the Musaba'ât and lineal descendant of their founder Tunsam (see p. 213), who re-established himself at El Obeid. In 1784-5 war broke out between Hashim and Sultan Mohamed Teirab of Darfur. The boundary between them was then only some three days' journey (about 60 miles) west of El Obeid. Teirab defeated Hashim in the Hamar country, and marched across Kordofan, posing as its deliverer. His army wanted to return home, but Teirab was afraid of his brothers, and procrastinated. He then fell ill and died. He was eventually succeeded by his younger brother Abd el rahman el Rashid, son of Ahmed Bukr, (1787-1802). Abd el rahman returned to Darfur, leaving a governor in Kordofan, but the latter was soon driven out by Hashim who re-appeared. W. G. Browne, the first Englishman to visit Darfur, was at El Fasher from 1793-6, and, when he left, the war between Hashim and the sultan of Darfur was not over. Abd el rahman, who made El Fasher the capital of Darfur, as it has remained ever since, received a letter from Napoleon, and was nearly overthrown by a Mamluke who fled to Darfur after the expulsion of the Mamlukes by Napoleon. On his death he was succeeded by his son Mohamed Fadl (1802-39) with the help of the principal eunuch Mohamed Kurra, who had ejected Hashim from Kordofan and governed it well for seven years. The young king soon however wearied of control by Mohamed

<sup>1</sup> See MacMichael, 1912.

Kurra and managed to kill him. Early in his reign El Fasher was visited by the merchant Omar el Tunisi,<sup>1</sup> and in 1821 Kordofan was lost by Darfur to the Egyptian, Mohamed Ali, who had overcome the Mamluke dynasty in 1811, and ordered the invasion of the Sudan in order to obtain men and money to make himself independent of Turkish control. His son, Ismail Pasha, therefore invaded and captured Dongola, only the Shaigia (see p. 215) resisting, and went on with one army to attack Sennar, while another army under Mohamed Ali's son-in-law, Mohamed Bey Defterdar, marched against Kordofan. To the north of Bara the Kordofan troops under the Darfur governor, Magdum Musallem, with no firearms, put up a gallant defence but were of course defeated, and the Turks were then in possession of all Kordofan except the Nuba Mountains.

At Sennar when Nasir was deposed in 1769, he had been succeeded by Ismail, who was the king who detained Bruce<sup>2</sup> in Sennar from April to September 1772. Ismail was deposed in 1776 by Badi wad Regab who succeeded Mohamed Abu el Kaylak that year. The last forty years of the Fung kingdom had been inglorious years of civil war, with the kingdom rapidly going to pieces. In the course of this civil war Arbagi, till then a prosperous town, was sacked and utterly destroyed in 1784. From 1788 the Fung 'kings' were prisoners in the hands of the Hamaj viziers. We hear of expeditions against the Ja'aliin kings of Shendi,<sup>3</sup> of a war between the Ja'aliin, and another between the Batahin and the Shukria. The details may be read in the almost contemporary 'Fung Chronicle'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Tunisi, 1845 and Tunisi, 1851.

<sup>2</sup> See Bruce, 1796.

<sup>3</sup> One of them, Mek Nimr, put to death the fugitive Musaba'at sultan, Hashim.

<sup>4</sup> MacMichael, 1922, ii, p. 7.

When Ismail Pasha with the Egyptian army sent against Sennar was still at Halfayat el Muluk, Sheikh Nasir el Amin, the vizier, submitted, and Ismail Pasha took with him Nasir's son and the *meks* of the Ja'aliin Sa'adab, Mek Nimr and Mek Musaad, and resumed his march on Sennar. Before he got there, Badi, the last shadow king of the Fung, came out and tendered his submission; and with the commencement of the Egyptian government the ancient history of the Sudan may be said to have ended, and the modern era to have begun.



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- A.A.A. *Liverpool Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology*.
- A.J.A. *American Journal of Archaeology*.
- J.E.A. *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*.
- J.N.E.S. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.
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1 (a) Rock picture of an elephant at Sarraa in  
Wadi Halfa district



1 (b) Rock picture of a bull at Amara West, possibly  
contemporary with Kerma and the C Group



2 (a) View of two of the forts at Semna taken from the east during the removal of the modern village



2 (b) Record of Nile levels at Semna East



3 (a) West side of the Western Deffufa (trading post) at Kerma

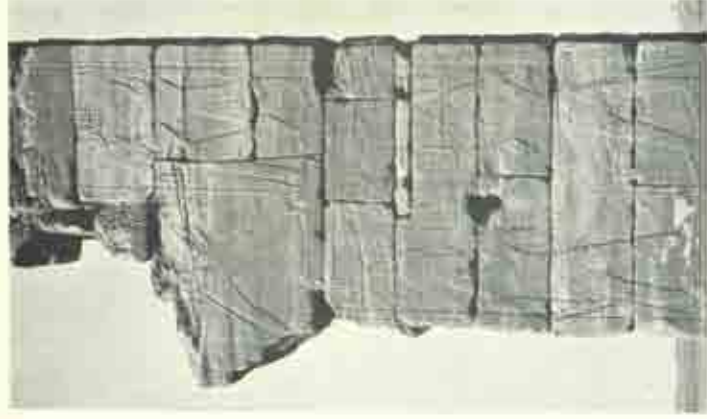


3 (b) The Eastern Deffufa (funerary chapel) at Kerma with part of the grave of a king of Cush in the foreground





4 (a) King Tutmosis III embraced by the deified King Sennet III; from the New Kingdom temple at Sennet East



4 (b) Reliefs from the outer doorway to the outer hypostyle hall in Sudd temple: (above) King Amenophis III embraced by his deified self; (below) King Amenophis III making offering to his deified self.



5 (a) Sulb temple from the north-west



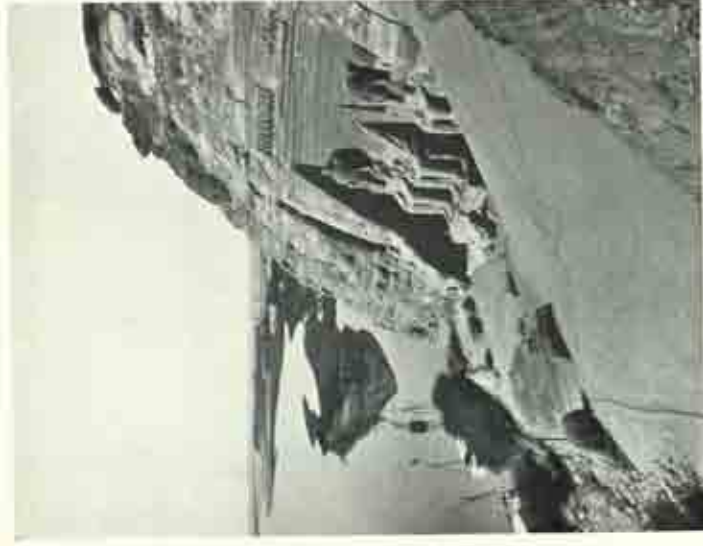
5 (b) Sulb temple: view from the top of the pylon



6 (a) Granite lion begun by King Amenophis III and finished under King Tutankhamen: removed from Sulb temple to Jebel Barkal by King Amanislo



6 (b) Column drum in Sulb temple, showing two conquered Sudanese tribes



7 (a) The great temple at Abu Simbel



7 (b) Sudanese prisoners driven before King Ramses II; relief inside the great temple at Abu Simbel





8 (a) A bull with horn deformed to represent the arm of a negro dancer: from the Nubian tribute scene in Luxor temple



8 (b) Ruin of temple of Rameses II at Aksha, showing a number of conquered Sudanese tribes



9 (a) Jebel Barkal from downstream



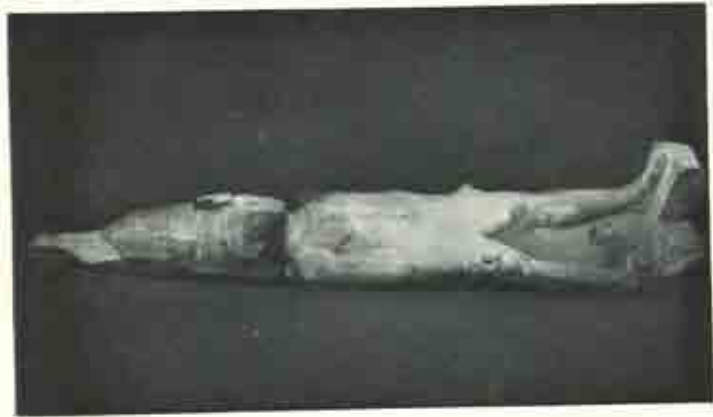
9 (b) Jebel Barkal from the river, showing traces of the four colossal figures of himself cut by King Taharqa.



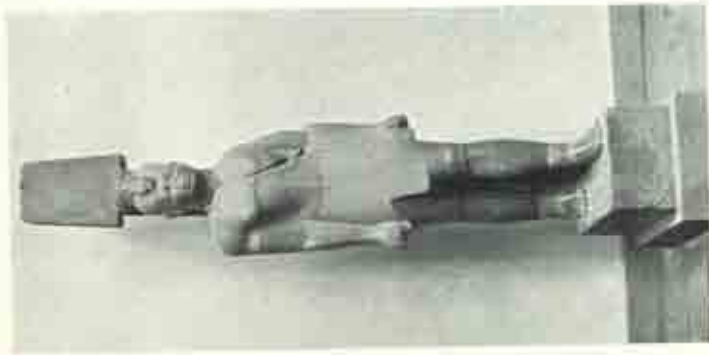
10 (a) The great temple of Amen seen from the top of Jebel Barkal



10 (b) The rock temple of King Taharqa at Jebel Barkal, as it was fifty years ago



11 (a) The black granite colossal statue of King Sahare found at Jebel Barkal



11 (b) Granite statue of King Aspelta, found at Jebel Barkal (height 3.32 m.)

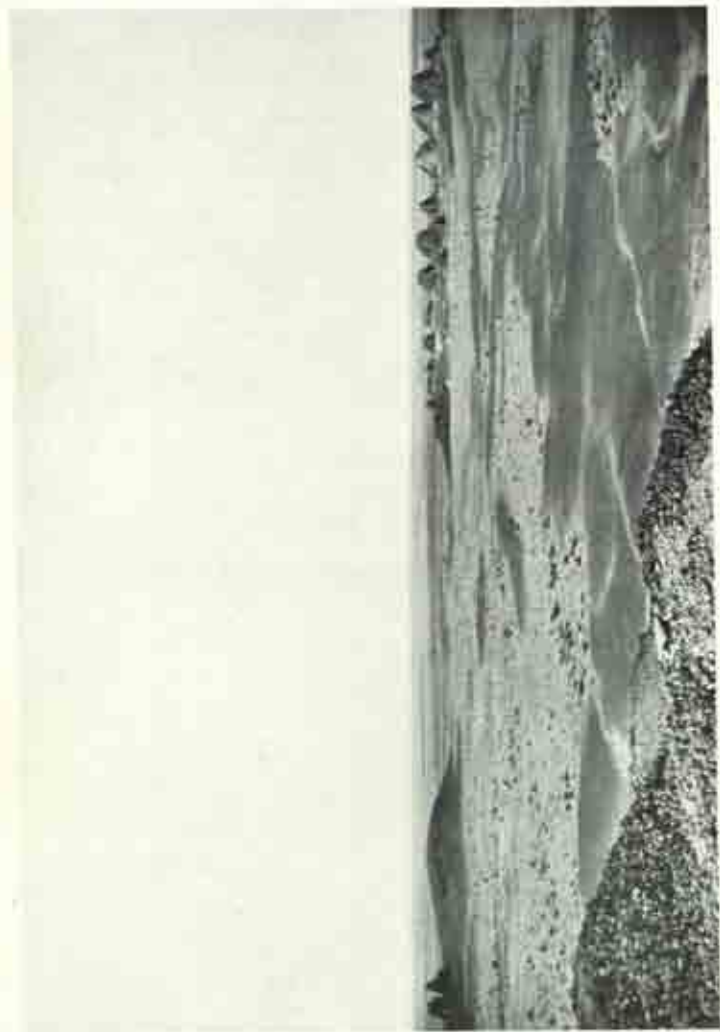




12 (a) The pyramids at Nuri



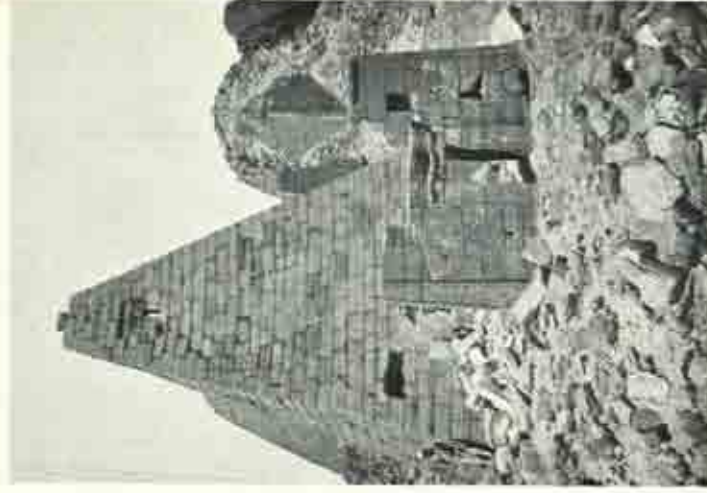
12 (b) The god Amen as a ram protecting King Taharqa: from the avenue approaching the great temple of Amen at Jebel Barkal



13 The South and North Cemeteries at Meroë, with the West Cemetery in the distance



14 (a) South wall of the chapel of Pyramid N. XII at Meroë  
probably that of King Shanakdakhete (c. B.C. 150-125)



14 (b) Pyramid (N. XIX) of King Tarekenidat  
(c. A.D. 200-220) at Meroë



15 (a) The great temple of Amen at Meroë



15 (b) One of the iron slag heaps at Meroë, cut by the railway

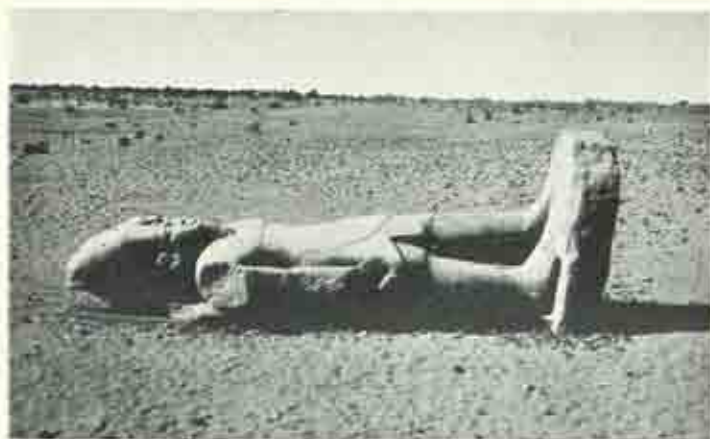




16 (a) The Lion Temple and Kiosk at Naga<sup>1</sup>



16 (b) King Natakamani, Queen Amanitêre and Prince Arikankharer before the god Apedemak, on the Lion Temple at Naga<sup>2</sup>



17 (a) One of the two recumbent colossal statues on Argo Island, attributed to King Natakamani



17 (b) Head of a bronze statue of the Roman emperor Augustus, found under the floor of the palace at Meroë



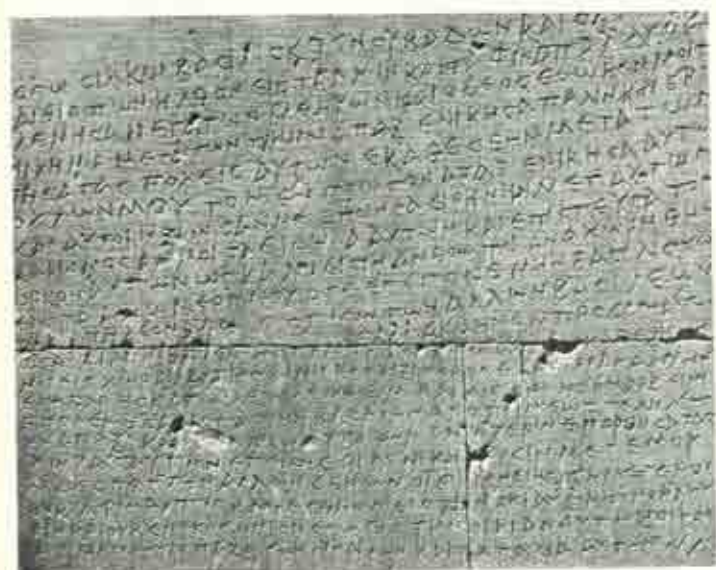
18 (a) Meroitic throne at Jebel Barkal, with prisoners of various nationalities (including a Greek) under the king's feet



18 (b) The main entrance way to the Meroitic ruins at Musawwarat el Sufra

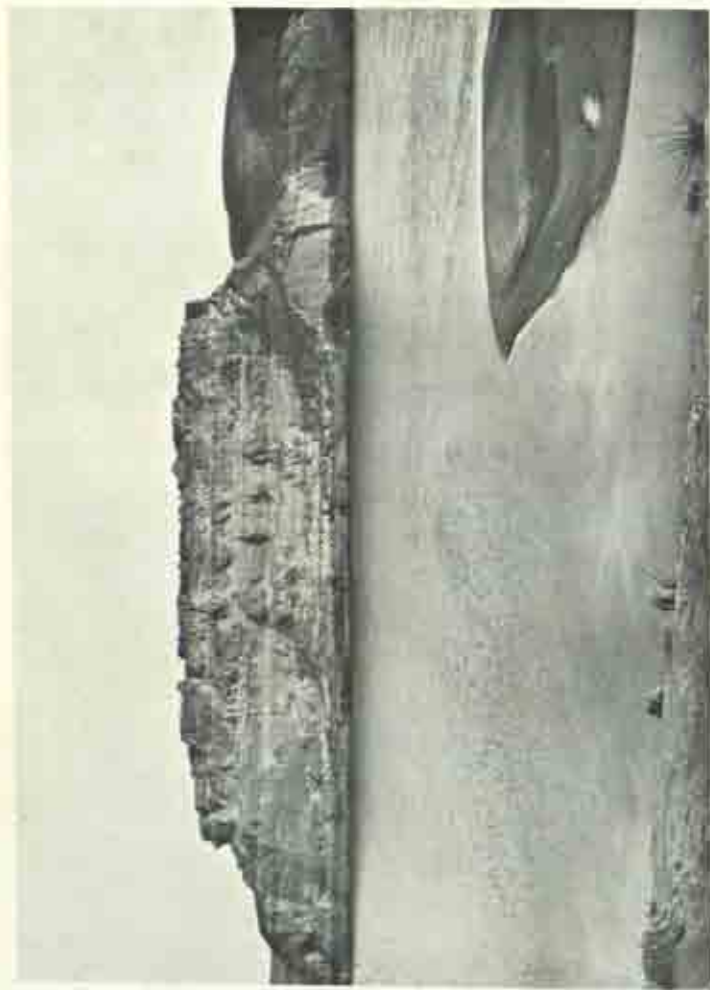


19 (a) The names of Carian soldiers scratched on a column at Abu Simbel



19 (b) The inscription of Silko 'King of the Nobatae and of all the Ethiopians' in the temple at Kalabsha





20 The fortified town of Kaar Ibrim in Lower Nubia



21 (a) The church at Mograka



21 (b) Atiri Island, upstream of Semna, with a small mud-brick church on the summit



22 (a) The church at Old Dongola, now a mosque



22 (b) The inscription in Old Dongola church, recording its conversion to a mosque in 1317 on the capture of Dongola by Seif el din Abdallah el Nasir



23 (a) The granite columns of a red-brick church at Sai-sab  
(the north end of Sai Island)

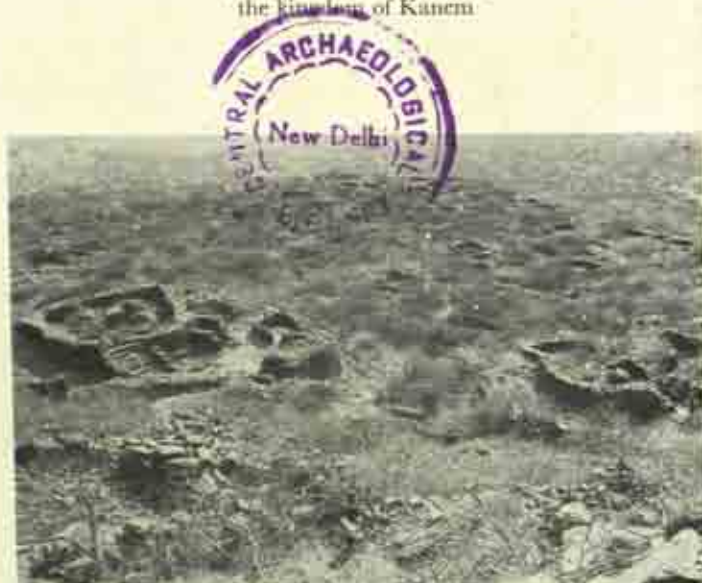


23 (b) The ruins of the fortress of Adu on Sai Island, from the south.



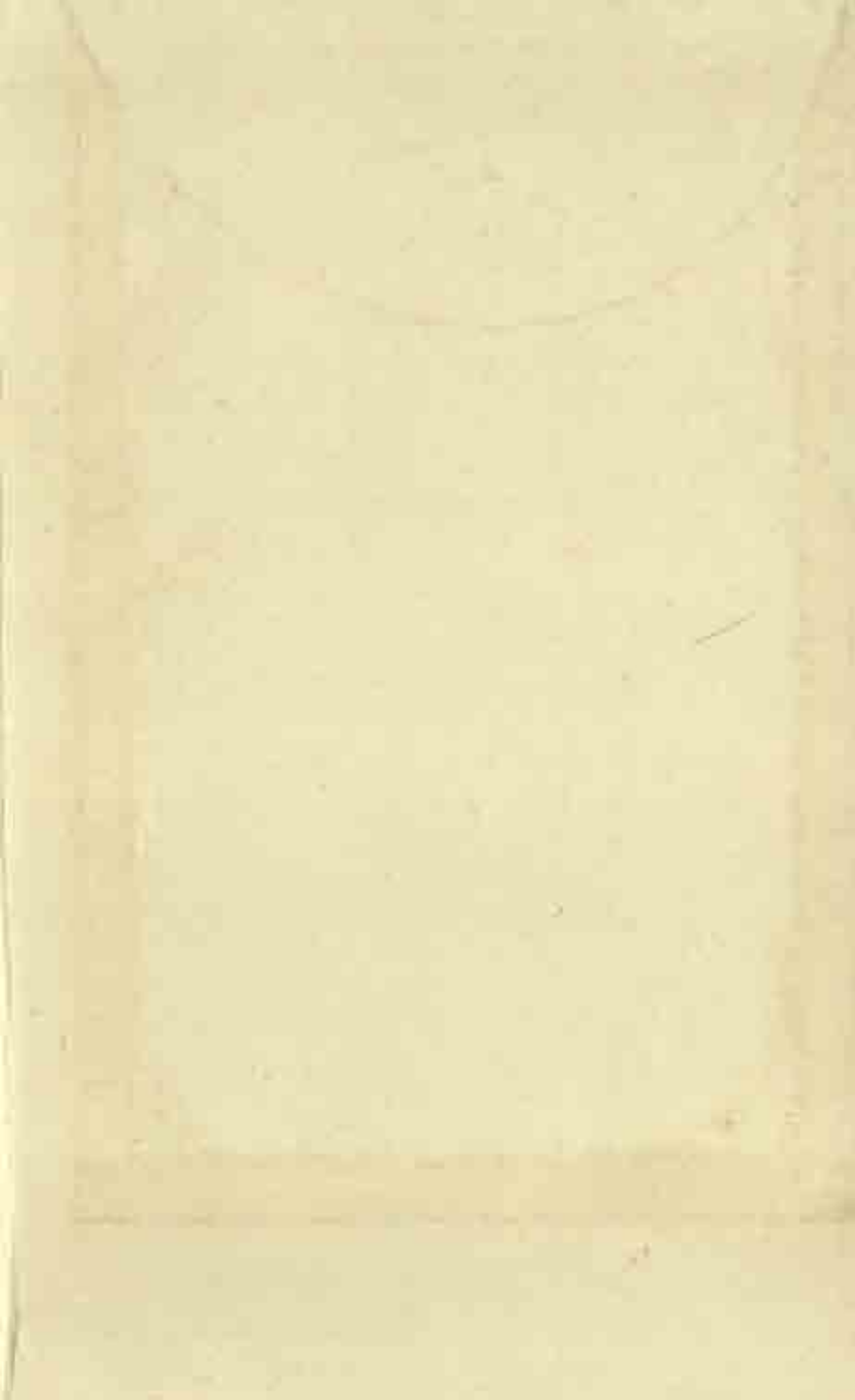


24 (a) The small back door of the stone-walled compound at Lāgia in the Wādī el Gaab, west of Dongola, probably to be attributed to the kingdom of Kanem.



24 (b) The platform of audience in the upper palace and part of the walled town of Uri in northern Darfur





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